

Defenders of Childhood

by ILoveLukeC

Category: How to Train Your Dragon, Rise of the Guardians

Genre: Adventure, Fantasy

Language: English

Characters: Hiccup, Jack Frost

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2013-07-27 14:43:27

Updated: 2013-10-18 22:41:47

Packaged: 2016-04-26 14:40:51

Rating: T

Chapters: 17

Words: 45,604

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: When the children are in peril and even the Guardians are unequally matched, who does the Man in the Moon call? Jack Frost, and if that wasn't bad enough, he's got to find three other potential heroes, three who can't even see him, let alone believe in him. This is an impossible feat but Jack's faced the impossible before. Rise - you are forevermore Defenders of Childhood. HIJACK

1. Chapter 1

The auroras shot across the sky, waving their many colours like desperate white flags. The stars winked in reply and whispered to the moonlit rays that zipped across the night sky before they shot off to their designated locations to stir the Guardians of Childhood. One particular moonlit orb zipped back to the Moon to wait further instructions.

The Man in the Moon paced across the silver tiled floor, his white shoes clicking anxiously as he rubbed his naked chin before gnawing on the inside of his cheek. "Five is not enough," The Man in the Moon whispered, realization dawning on him. "We need more to stand even half a chance."

The Man in the Moon knew what he had to do. He didn't like it, but he knew that power came in numbers and what better than to have heroes from several different eras?

The Man in the Moon turned to a crystalline book case on the far side of the control room. He took long strides forward until he stood in front of the book case, his chubby fingers running over the worn titles. He tugged a thick leather spine and opened the book, gazing at the beautifully drawn sketches of dragons in flight and the sloppier Norse letters. He smiled slightly and let his fingers stop on a certain page, depicting a sleek black dragon with a large wingspan, wide curious eyes and glistening scales.

He placed the homemade book on a floating glass side table before snapping his fingers, causing the one moonlight beam to dart forward and push a crystal stepstool in front of the short man. He nodded his thanks as he hopped onto the stool and searched for the next book.

This book was short and sweet, a fairytale classic of a girl with long golden hair that lived eighteen years in a tower until she got her first taste of freedom. The book actually wasn't short, as the story never ended, not for the characters nor the readers alike. The story simply didn't end after one Happily Ever After.

He held the book out and let his fingertips loose grip before his eyes scanned for the last book. The moonbeam flickered in panic and flew forward, causing the book to connect with its light. The light of the moonbeam flowed into the book's front cover which had recieved a direct hit. A drop of golden light leaked from the crinkled pages as the moon beam huffily tossed it beside the first book.

"Careful!" The chubby man scolded, finally finding the dark teal spine of the last book. He flipped through it, landing on a page on Will-O-the-Wisps. He sighed contently and hopped off of his stool before turning to the moon beam and the other two books. "Now, to get to work."

The small man slaved over the three books, flipping feverishly through pages before finding the correct one, scanning through chapters before latching onto the correct paragraph, the correct sentence, the correct word. One mistake and everything the Man in the Moon had worked for would be for nothing.

The man swiped his arm across his pale forehead, causing his wispy hair to flare in odd directions. He sighed, content with the pages before he stood and called upon the moon beam. "The Sands of Time, please," He directed and the moonbeam zipped away for a moment and reappeared the next, this time followed by four floating crystal hourglasses filled with generous amounts of silver sand.

The Man in the Moon took the hourglasses in his hands and turned to the three books.

It was the moment of truth.

He unscrewed the first hourglass and ordered the moonbeam to grab his vials. The moonbeam darted toward the glass shelfings and pulled three vials free before zooming back to its master. The Man in the Moon gingerly took them and placed them on the table.

The first vial he decided on was filled with shiny black scales. He picked a reflective scale from the vial and let the scale flit into the hourglass. The moment the scale and the sand connected, an auburn light flashed.

The first hourglass was placed in front of the leather book full of dragon drawings. The second hourglass was unscrewed, along with the second vial, filled with glowing embers. An ember sparked out of the vial and landed gracefully into the hourglass before flashing a fiery red.

The second hourglass was set before the third book about

Will-O-the-Wisps. The Man in the Moon furrowed his brow as he stared at the third vial, gleaming with ice. He needed the hourglasses in order of their historic times.

The moonbeam brightened suddenly, causing the Man to turn and watch the moonbeam dance excitedly in the air. He glanced at the purple book containing the fairytale and smiled with relief. He unscrewed the hourglass quickly and watched as the drop of golden light slid down the lip of the hourglass, flashing the sand gold.

The third hourglass was leant against the purple book as the Man in the Moon picked up the last hourglass, the one he was putting so much faith in. He held it in his hands and peered into it, before lifting the vial of ice and letting the ice shards drop in, one by one, until the hourglass was radiating with blue light.

The Man in the Moon hurried to grab a silver sheet of satin, which he wrapped around the books and their designated hourglasses. He tied the blue hourglass around the sheet with leather cording, before he held the loose ends out to the moonbeam like reins. "Go," The Man in the Moon warned, "before it is too late."

...

Jack wasn't too happy about having to cut his snowball fight short with Jamie and his friends, but even the Guardian of Fun knew when to be serious at times. Jack said his good-byes and promised Jamie he'd stop by for his mom's famous Christmas cookies when he had the chance. He then hopped on the wind and left Burgess with mild flurries.

The first place Jack could think of going was North's. Jack followed the rainbow lights until he spotted the grey smoke curling up out of one of the many brick chimneys. Jack found an unlatched skylight and hopped through, his staff clutched in his fist.

The rest of the Guardians were already there, which didn't surprise Jack. Within a year, Jack had gotten used to the Guardians and how they almost always were early to these sort of things. He had the habit of being fashionably late unless he was really interested, which at the moment, he was very interested at the odd circumstances and rude ending to his game with Jamie.

Bunny was perched in a ruby red loveseat with his large feet inches from the roaring flames of the fire, his claws finding purchase in the armrests as his furry ears twitched nervously. Sandy floated forward, patting Bunny's paw in an encouraging manner.

Jack dropped from the ceiling's wooden rafters, landing gracefully on his bare feet. Bunny jumped and shot Jack a spring-green glare which Jack smirked at. Tooth and the four little fairies she'd brought along to North's quickly encircled Jack in a tight hug and suffocating chittering. North eventually made an appearance, entering through a thick set of doors, followed by two anxious Yetis. He walked down a few stairs and addressed the room grimly, "There is problem. Big problem."

Jack sighed and nodded. "Sort of figured, North. When those lights turn on, there's never a medicore problem."

Bunny shot Jack a stony glare. "This isn't the time for jokes, frostbite."

Jack flared his nostrils, about to retort, when Tooth's voice broke, "North. What is it?" Her wings fluttered and whirred as she zipped about impulsively before settling on floating in front of her dear friend and offering him a comforting hand on his large shoulder. He smiled through his evident worry and his salt-and-pepper mustache before addressing the room once again, "Pitch Black is back."

The news caused an uproar, mainly from the boomerang-weilding oversized rabbit. Bunny leapt to his feet, forgetting at once that they were still numb with cold. "Did I hear that right, mate? Pitch Black ... back? We just defeated him last year! He couldn't have gotten power so fast!"

Sandy motioned to the globe covered in golden blips of light and a golden question mark materialized over his flared crown of hair. He shrugged and pointed at the globe in confusion.

Bunny nodded feverishly and hopped toward the globe, throwing his furry arms into the air. "Exactly!" Bunny yelled. "We have all of the belief! It's _doubled _since we defeated Pitch! He-"

"_Aster,_" North interrupted. His forehead bore new worry lines as he rubbed the bridge of his nose. "_I know._ Let me finish." North strode forward, his boots the only sound in the room besides the Guardians' panicked breathing. "Manny says Pitch is in power, but not here. Not exactly."

"You're making no sense, North!" Bunny roared, his voice growing shrill. He could barely understand North's accent after decades of fighting side-by-side with him; his accent grew even less intelligible when North talked absolute nonsense.

North was about to continue his argument with Bunny when a moonbeam darted through the skylight Jack had left open. A silver bag wound of satin floated down behind the moonbeam and the bag was set on the _G _crest. The Guardians fell silent at the glowing stranger.

A kindly voice echoed from the beam of moonlight, which brightened with each word. "Hello, my friends."

North, Tooth, Bunny and Sandy bowed in harmony; the Yetis dropped the toys they had been cradling to crouch into a half-kneel. Jack was left standing, his staff slipping through his fingers at the voice. His staff clattered to the floor and his mouth slid open as he gaped at the orb of light.

"Man in Moon," North said, standing to his full height.

Bunny nervously rubbed his furry arm, standing as well. "Manny, mate ... How can Pitch be back?"

The Man in the Moon chuckled, although there was barely any humor in the sound. "Pitch has many methods, Aster. This is only one, one with, sadly, disastrous consequences.

"In order to level the playing field, I believe we must resort to the Defenders of Childhood," The Man in the Moon paused, noting

reactions. Bunny's ears drooped slightly. Tooth's wings froze mid-flap. North stared at the moonbeam in partical disbelief. Sandy glanced at Jack and nodded firmly.

Jack noticed the glances from the other Guardians. "Wh-what are Defenders of Childhood?" Jack asked, suddenly suspisious.

"Well," The Man in the Moon's voice began, "the best answer to that is _you, _Jack. You and the three other chosen heroes."

Jack raised a speckled eyebrow. "Whoa, what? I'm finally getting used to this Guardian thing! You can't just slap a new label on my forehead!"

"Jack," Tooth struggled to keep a calm tone of voice, "as a Defender of Childhood, you'll have partners more ... around your age."

Jack narrowed his eyes. "I don't need anyone around my age!"

Bunny hated to see Jack go, but he knew he would need to man up and join the Defenders if they would have a chance against Pitch. "Manny, what should Jack do?"

Jack couldn't believe his ears nor his eyes as North and Tooth nodded in agreement. Jack couldn't help but feel a growing sense of disappointment in himself. The Guardians were all set for getting rid of him.

Jack felt a growl rise up his throat. "Fine! When do I leave? The sooner, the better!" He leaned down, grabbing his staff and holding it readily, trying his hardest to fight back tears while avoiding eye contact and keeping composure.

The Man in the Moon noticed this, as well as the hurt expressions of the Guardians. He cleared his throat slightly before his voice hummed from the moonbeam. "The bag, Jack, contains four hourglasses and three books. One of these hourglasses is yours. The hourglasses are trackers, almost; they glow when you get close enough to the other Defenders. The Defenders are in three seperate eras, but with the Sands of Time at your fingertips, it shouldn't be too horribly difficult to find them and convince them of your existence and then their help."

Jack, who had been busy fiddling with his own hourglass, which painted his palm and face a soft blue, looked up with bewilderment reflecting in his eyes. "Let me get this straight. You want _me _- an irresponsible ex-Guardian of Fun - to find three Defenders, who don't even _believe _in me and live in completely different times and convince them that they've been chosen by a Man in a _Moon _to defeat The Bogeyman? Has living in the Earth's atmosphere since The Golden Age fried your brain cells?"

Tooth gasped and raised a thin finger to scold Jack, but all the Man in the Moon did was chuckle. Jack noticed the humor leaking through the moonbeam which had been dormant for how many lunar eclipses, Jack couldn't begin to guess. "Well, the Moonship _does _have several leaks," The Man in the Moon said in an undertone before replying in a slightly louder voice, "Jack, you are a Guardian and a Defender. I am placing all of my faith in you. I know you can do this; no feat is too impossible for Jack Frost. I've seen you face the impossible

before and you won."

_No pressure or anything, _Jack thought absently.

"There is a catch," Jack let out an audible groan at the Man in the Moon's words. "One of the Defenders is in a book."

"Oh, great," Jack sighed. "Now I have to find some fictional person, too? That's just _awesome._"

"You will also need to do some reading, other than the fairytale-"

"What? You've got to be kidding!"

"You didn't let me finish. It's only so you can meet the Defenders alone, as conversing with an invisible person is considered socially unexcepthable within these eras-"

"Yeah, yeah, I know," Jack huffed and crossed his arms. "Is that it?"

"_Actually_, you also have to find them in order of their eras. What came first, Jack? The Viking, the rebel or the lost princess?" Jack could sense the smug smile on the Man's face by his voice.

"Is this a trick question?" Jack asked suspiciously. He could hear Bunny's groan from behind him and Jack smiled before growing serious. "Could you give me a hint?"

"It's the bloody Viking!" Bunny shouted in annoyance.

Jack turned and pursed his lips before saying, "I knew that." He bent down, grabbing the silver bag which morphed into a satchel in Jack's hands. He smiled, unlooping the silvery leather to peer inside the bag. He mentally counted the books and the hourglasses before he turned to the Guardians and the moonbeam. He exchanged good-byes and good-natured taunts about Bunny's 'cold feet' and waited expectantly for instruction.

"The hourglasses work like North's globes. Just shake yours and say where you want to go," The Man in the Moon explained and when Jack continued to stare at his moonbeam, he quickly added, "The Isle of Berk, Meridian of Misery."

Jack nodded, grabbing his staff and clutching his blue hourglass in his fist. "I'll see you all later, then," Jack added as an afterthought and waved slightly before he gave the hourglass a vigorous shake. The Sands of Time swirled and Jack barely had time to give the address of where he was headed before the portal sucked him in, leaving the Guardians and the moonbeam alone in the workshop with only their thoughts and the grumbling of the Yetis as company.

"Now, what?" North asked, breaking the uneasy silence.

"Now," The Man in the Moonbeam began, "We find Pitch and give Jack more time. He'll need it where he's headed."

**So, this is my first ever Big Four fanfic and I hope you guys liked

it. Here's how the Guardians/Defenders go:**

****Jack Frost: Guardian of Fun/Defender of Winter****

****Hiccup Haddock: Guardian of Change/Defender of Fall (or Autumn, whichever)****

****Merida DunBroch: Guardian of Bravery/Defender of Summer****

****Rapunzel Fitzherbert: Guardian of Creativity/Defender of Spring****

****Most of these titles have ultimately been selected by the fandom (via Tumblr because I have no life) and seeing them as Defenders of the seasons just seemed pretty cool to me. (Lame explanation)****

****Most of this should be correct, movie-wise and grammar-wise, but if it isn't, be sure to tell me and I'll go back and fix it.****

****On the topic of ships, I'm either planning on just Hijack or no romantic ships at all and just strong friendship; this is mostly because I really love Rapunzel and Eugene together and by now, they'd most likely have been married for a while, as the fictional world goes along in tune with ours. Merida isn't all for marriage and there was some hinting at the end of the movie that the boy from the Dingwall clan fancied her (hinting as in he started making out with her hand before looking imploring into her eyes before setting off to his ship; you know, ****_**if **_**I remember right**). Hiccup also has Astrid, whom I might keep, but it depends on her attitude to Hiccup talking to Jack, which she would see as air for the better part of the fanfic.****

****So, yes. And, I have to thank for this inspiration either Rapunzel or 8Tracks which is the best goddamn thing in the world (****_**psst Big Four mixes psst**_****))****

****I'll see you all in the next chapter!****

2. Chapter 2

The only thing Jack knew for certain was that he really did not like time travel. Jack had always expected time travel to be freakishly awesome, which it was for about ten seconds before the swirling sand vortex sucked him up and spit him out.

Jack's landing wasn't graceful; it was anything but. The only real comfort was the frosted air and the cool embrace of the wind as Jack tumbled from the vortex and landed awkwardly on his staff. He spit out peices of dying grass and wiped his chin of dirt and sat up, groaning. His eyes widened when he actually took in his surroundings.

Jack was perched on a rocky cliffside, overlooking the Isle of Berk, which was a mostly round island covered in several large forests, rocky beaches, cliffs and odd geological arches and forms placed throughout the surrounding waters. There was an obvious village full of newer homes tucked near a harbor and deeper within the island;

Viking ships with wooden sea monster heads bobbed over the roaring waves of the Meridian of Misery.

Jack hopped to his feet and dug through his silver satchel until he found the leather book. He flipped through it, furrowing his eyebrows at the drawings of winged beasts and the odd language written in charcoal. "I can't read this; it isn't even English!" Jack shouted in frustration.

There was a shriek in the air and Jack jumped, almost dropping the book. Jack searched his surroundings, heard the peircing shriek again and reluctantly looked to the skies.

Jack had to do a double-take and a triple-take until he stood gaping at the sky, his mission forgotten. Was that...?

It was. A streak of black flashed through the blue irredescent sky, two bolts of black flaring up into wings. A shot of purple fire smashed through a cloud and exploded, causing the purple to smear across the sky, which the winged beast soared through.

"Dragons?" Jack gasped and laughed. "This is so cool!" Of course, being a Guardian and frozen at the age of eighteen, Jack had seen some insane things but never in three-hundred years did he expect to see a _dragon._

The dragon shrieked once again and did something Jack didn't expect; it soared in his direction. Jack took a step back and watched in awe as the dragon swept its tail-which was actually _half _of a tail, the other half red leather painted with a skull design-and gave a majestic roar. In tune with the roar was a wild whoop.

Jack knew that sound; it was sound Jamie made whenever Jack showed up to start a snowball fight. It was the sound of utter joy.

As the dragon neared, Jack spotted a flash of fur and hair, pale freckled skin and metal. A light exploded from the satchel, painting the lowermost side of it auburn. Jack raised his eyebrows and opened the satchel, pulling the auburn hourglass from its leather confines. It hummed with energy and began to pull Jack toward the dragon.

Jack had a sense of panic. The hourglass's pull to the dragon was strong, strong enough that Jack had to dig his bare heels into the grass and dirt to try to slow the pull.

The dragon was landing. It was going to land on top of Jack if he didn't move. Jack took a deep breath and somehow grabbed his staff and kept the book in his grip at the same time, before he struggled to tug the hourglass and himself into the foilage of the surrounding forest.

The dragon landed swiftly on the cliffside, its large feet crushing rocks like pebbles underfoot. The dragon was sleek and black as midnight and its scales glistened like weathered stones at the bottom of a riverbed. The dragon's wide curious green eyes dialated slightly as the dragon sniffed the air but the dragon's eyes refocused when a hand caressed the top of its head affectionately; the dragon gave a purr and took a few steps forward as its master unhooked himself from the homemade leather saddle.

The dragon master unclenched his prosthetic foot from the metal stirrup and brought his leg up and over the dragon's body before placing both of his feet on the ground. The dragon rider was much younger than Jack had been expecting; he looked about fifteen or maybe that was just because of his poor physique and slouched shoulders, which made him look much younger than he might've been. The boy - Jack couldn't help but consider him that - looked like he'd been through a lot, as Jack noted the metal leg jutting from his knee down.

"That was a great ride, buddy," The boy told the dragon reassuringly as he walked around to pat the dragon's snout. The dragon bumped its snout against the boy's hand before hitting him roughly with its head. "Okay, okay," The boy laughed, taking the hint. "We'll go catch some fish, then. You're impatient today!"

The dragon rolled its eyes and followed the boy, licking its lips hungrily. Jack caught a glipse of glistening pink gums and Jack had to smile slightly. Tooth would have a heart attack, he thought, feeling a slight pang as he remembered his good-bye with the Guardians.

The hourglass flashed in Jack's hand and began to unceremoniously drag him a few feet behind the dragon's swishing tail. Jack furrowed his eyebrows, reconizing the dragon. He willed the wind to flip through the leather book and he could see sketches of the beast in front of him. Jack grabbed the book and stuffed it into the satchel, trying to keep a hold of his staff and the hourglass.

The dragon and the boy seemed to know exactly where to go through the winding twists and turns of the forest. They eventually stopped near a log which lay on its side; the boy stepped around the log whereas the dragon stepped over. Jack tripped over it, clutching the hourglass now with two hands, his staff hooked around the slash of fabric which held the satchel across his chest.

The dragon's ears perked as Jack grumbled under his breath about talking moonbeams and stupid destinies. The boy walked to a cluster of bushes and pulled a wire cage from the branches, picking out leaves as he walked toward the edge of a pond. He opened the wire cage and twisted a part of it before he grabbed a rope and knotted it before throwing the cage into the pond.

"Hiccup!" A voice called from the air, followed by several roars. A blonde girl in a skeletal skirt and blue-grey tank top hopped off a blue monstrosity, at least in Jack's eyes. The dragon was covered in turquoise scales, its black talons the length of Jack's forearm. The dragon's stomach was cream and buldging; this new dragon stood on two jurassic legs the width of tree trunks. The wings and tail were a different story entirely. The tail's cream spikes smoothed down as it landed, although they did spike whenever its wings pushed against the air. The underside of the wings were cream, the outerside covered in turquoise scales and golden splotches which matched its gold serpentine eyes.

"Hey, Astrid," The boy said, turning his full attention to the girl, a pink blush seeping into his freckled cheeks. Jack noticed and laughed. The kid had a crush!

"This is just too great," Jack said, stepping forward to watch the

exchange. The hourglass had fizzled out when the girl had arrived, so Jack placed it back into the satchel and unhooked his staff, sitting on the balls of his feet, a smirk turning up the corners of his mouth.

"So, how was the ride? You used to it at all?" The blonde girl inquired as she walked over to the boy, slipping her legs and pelt boots beneath her. She smiled encouragingly at the boy.

The boy shrugged, his attitude changing drastically. "Eh, well, you don't expect to just up and lose your leg," He muttered before puffing air through his nose. "I'm sorry."

"No, Hiccup," The girl began, looking down to her hands in her lap, "I know losing your leg has been really hard for you. It's understandable."

Jack would've laughed at the unintentionable pun if the atmosphere hadn't been as tense as it was. This was obviously a sore subject for the kid and Jack couldn't possibly blame him; Jack's death was still a subject Jack himself had to tread lightly on.

"It's just ... ," The boy continued. "There's a metal fixture where half of my leg should be. I don't know if I'll ever be used to it."

The girl patted the boy on the shoulder, trying to peek at his face which was covered by a curtain of auburn hair. "Hiccup ... You know I'm here for you. We're all here."

"Yeah, so am I," Jack yelled from his hiding spot behind a scraggly bush. No one seemed to notice him and he just shrugged, peering intently at the scene before him.

"Thank you, Astrid," Hiccup said, brushing his bangs away from his bright green eyes. "Does Stormfly want any fish?" He asked, glancing at Astrid's dragon as it restlessly fluttered its wings.

Astrid turned her attention to Stormfly. "No, I think we might head back home," She said, nodding to her and turning back to smile at Hiccup. "But, thank you for the offer. Now, don't stay long. We've got training bright and early tomorrow."

Hiccup groaned, feeling a tug on the rope. "Don't remind me," He said as he began to pull the rope towards him. Astrid laughed and turned away before mounting Stormfly. "See you tomorrow!" She called as the dragon kicked off.

"Bye," Hiccup said softly, pulling the cage to shore. A large fish was caught in the trap, its slippery body wriggling in a panic. His dragon, Toothless, perked up at the prospect of food and hurried over to his master, peering down at the fish with salivating chops. "Hey, Toothless, stop! Give me a second!" Hiccup had to fend off his hungry dragon while struggling to unhinge the wire cage of the fish.

Hiccup pulled the fish out and tossed it over his shoulder, which, as Fate would have it, landed directly in Jack's lap. Jack grimaced at the slimy flopping fish in his hands and slowly glanced up, feeling hot breath on his face. Jack almost gagged at the smell of fish and raw meat and gulped at the dragon facing him. Its irises were

dilated and its nostrils flared.

Jack laughed nervously and picked up the fish by its tail, holding it to the side. The dragon's eyes reluctantly tore away from Jack's face and followed the fish. Jack raised an eyebrow, smiling slightly, before he raised the fish up then down. The dragon followed his movements hungrily.

Jack couldn't but laugh. "Time for a little fun," He said smuggly before jumping to his feet, holding the fish an arm's length away. The dragon followed as Jack expected.

Jack smiled and threw the fish into the air, jumping and grabbing it before the dragon could leap for the fish. Jack ran around the little enclosure, the dragon on his heels.

Hiccup sighed, three more wire cages in his arms. "Toothless, be quiet! You'll scare away the fish!" Hiccup was about to throw the traps into the pond when he heard Toothless's impatient roar. "_Toothless_-"

Hiccup's jaw dropped, along with the three cages. Toothless was chasing a _floating fish?_ Hiccup stared at the scene in utter shock.

Jack laughed, followed closely by the aggravated dragon. He heard a shout from the boy. "Toothless! Toothless!" The dragon tore its annoyed eyes away from Jack and the fish and turned its gaze to the panicked boy who was staring at Jack.

At least, Jack _thought _he was staring at him. Really, Hiccup was staring at the floating fish Jack dangled between his fingers but it was still enough to spark hope in Jack's heart. He hopped down from his perch on a rock and took a step toward Hiccup. "You can see me?" He asked, emotion twisting his voice.

Toothless growled at Jack as he closed the distance between them. Toothless took a step in front of Hiccup protectively and narrowed his eyes at the white-haired teen with the odd blue leather and torn pants.

An auburn light ignited once again in Jack's satchel, startling Toothless and causing him to roar in surprise. Hiccup glanced at his dragon fearfully. "Toothless ... What's happening?"

The dragon turned to his friend in confusion. How could Hiccup not be seeing this strange guy and that light?

Jack pulled the hourglass from his bag and it began to drag him once again. Jack wrinkled his nose in frustration and let go of the hourglass, which flew through the air and landed in front of Toothless's clawed feet. Toothless twitched and sniffed the hourglass before sneezing.

The hourglass reacted to the sneeze by flaring up with auburn light. It hopped into the air before hitting Hiccup square in the chest.

Jack actually laughed. He thought it was funny until realization dawned and he watched the kid with the short brown hair fall into the

pond.

The dragon, Jack noticed, was having a giant panic attack. He was flying into the air, roaring, and trying to dip himself in the water. Jack looked around, grabbed his staff and placed his feet on the edge of the shore, looking for the kid.

He spotted him alright. The auburn light was glowing so bright, Jack had to squint to see the outline of the boy more clearly. Jack dipped his hooked staff into the water, ignoring the crinkling of the water particles freezing up. He scooted the staff out, inch by inch, until the hook was around the boy's small frame. With a giant heave, Jack hurled the boy up through a thin layer of frosted ice and onto the sandy bank.

Jack sighed in relief when Hiccup coughed, followed by Jack's groan. "I'm gonna kill this kid before he even believes in me," Jack muttered in exasperation. Jack heard a distant growl and glanced up, locking eyes with a _very _pissed off dragon.

_If this dragon doesn't kill me first! _Jack thought in fleeting panic before jumping out of the way of a suddenly full mouth of knashing canines.

...

Meanwhile, in the peacefully sleeping kingdom of Corona, deep within the palace, tucked in the royal sleeping quarters, slept a girl of nineteen, who just so happened to be _the _once lost princess, beside her husband of twenty-seven. The girl's choppy brown hair flared across the goose-feather pillows and she snuggled into her husband's side between the mass of blankets.

Unknown to the sleeping couple, a single drop of golden sunshine slipped through the crack between the glass of the window, down the wooden frame before rolling to a stop on the stone floor before continuing on its way across the room to the bed. The girl in the bed sighed sleepily as the drop made its journey down the wall to the stone floor. It rolled across the floor and seemed to stop as the girl sighed sleepily and stuck her bare foot out of the protection of the covers.

The drop of sunshine seemed to swell as its golden self infused in the wooden bedframe. The sunshine sped through the cracks of the bed before it reached the canopy of silk and lazily slipped through its fine fibers to land on a strand of sleep-tousled brown hair.

For a moment, nothing happened. Then, there was a golden flash and the strands of hair glowed blonde and began to lengthen and lenthen until ... Seventy feet of trademark hair were strung around the room.

...

In a very different setting, sat yet another princess, although she wasn't once lost nor supporting seventy feet of magical hair. No, instead, she was supporting a sour expression and a mass of unruly fiery curls. This sour expression was faced to her mother, whom was trying to convince her daughter to tell her of a boy she fancied.

"_Mum,_ " The girl began in an annoyed Scottish drawl as she groaned and fell dramatically across her mother's bed in exasperation.

"_Merida_, " Her mother, Elinor, shot back, her tone clipped and motherly. She crossed her arms, her long dark olive-green sleeves bunching up where they met her elbows.

"I don't fancy anyone, Mum," Merida DunBrouch sighed and rolled onto her stomach before slamming her face into the fur blanket lain across the bed.

"That's not what I've heard," Elinor sang as she took a seat on the edge of the bed. She began to pet Merida's unruly hair, twirling her finger around a stubborn curl. _Just like my daughter,_ She thought, twisting the piece of orange hair around her pale forefinger until Merida squeaked.

Elinor raised her eyebrows in surprise. "Sorry, dear," She mumbled before standing up and dusting off the front of her dress, noticing a stray golden thread. "Weren't you going to take Angus for a ride today?" She asked, scowling at the thin bit of fabric.

Merida hopped off the bed in a split second. "Yeah, I promised him I would," Merida began, about to leave the room. She ran her nails over the doorframe and testily asked, "Would you like to come along, Mum?"

Elinor looked up, surprised by the request. She could tell by Merida's blue eyes that she was torn between asking out of courtesy and actually wanting her mother along for the ride. Elinor laughed and smiled, shaking her head and causing her pin straight brunette hair to brush dress. "Oh no, dear, I must find those troublesome brothers of yours," Elinor sighed before adding, "And your father."

Merida giggled and nodded, understanding her mother's predicament completely. Her eyes caught a flash of red near the roaring fire in the stone fireplace before they turned back to her mother. "Alright, then. They might be smuggling cakes and knowing 'Da, he's out helping them."

Elinor nodded in agreement and followed her daughter out the doorway, going in seperate directions, Elinor to the kitchens and Merida down the hall. Merida peeked out from her hiding place, making sure no servant nor her mother would find her liotering about, when she made a mad dash for her mother's room, closing the door as quietly as she could behind her.

Merida turned, spotting the crackling fire. She rushed it, her dark teal dress swishing at the sudden determined movement. Merida peered into the fire, watching it crackle and spark, until she could see the dark red outline of a bow between the tongues of flame.

Merida's first instinct was to reach into the flames, but she was stubborn, not stupid. She grabbed a fire poker and stabbed into the flames and coals until the metal caught around the red-hot flame of the bow.

Pulling the poker out, Merida stared in blue-eyed astonishment at the carefully carved bow which she'd dropped on the floor. The red scars of the fire were diminishing, but instead of being coated in ash, the bow was white as marble and was strung with a delicate yet strong material. Merida reached an uncertain hand out and with surprise, picked the bow off the ground and felt it in her hands. It was still a little hot to the touch but not enough to give her any severe burns, only a warm feeling throughout her hand which then sped through her body.

Merida stood, the bow in her hand, as she rushed through the castle to the stables where Angus awaited her late presence. He whinnied in outrage at her tardiness but soon forgot the reason as he stared at the creamy bow in his master's hand. She'd grabbed her cloak on the way down and threw it on hurriedly, excitement flaring in her chest as she mounted her steed. "Angus," She began, a smile tugging at her lips. "Let's go down the shooting route today."

...

Back in present time, in the darkest corners of his throne room he'd concocted out of the worst nightmares imaginable, Pitch Black brooded upon a throne of spiky shadows and inspected the center piece before him.

"A little to the left," He ordered, somewhat lacking any real authority in his tired voice. A few muscular Nightmares pushed the center piece to their left before Pitch said, "No, no, _my _left, you bumbling idiots."

The Nightmares obliged, although if they would have their own thoughts, they would've told Pitch to suck it up and deal with it being a little off center. But, of course, they couldn't say that and if they had, they would be but a believer short of being bright and golden and that was a despicable thought, even to Pitch Black. He would simply dispose of the Nightmare as he did all his enemies: with a bit of backstabbing.

The Nightmare King's invisible eyebrows rose as he smiled a sharklike grin that even a mother shark would disown. "Now, _that_," Pitch laughed, "_that _is what I'm talking about. It looks absolutely ravishing in this dark, don't you think, Gothel?"

Mother Gothel, who had been sulking behind his throne rolled her eyes in distaste as she crossed her eyes. "I still don't see the appeal," She muttered under her breath.

"You just don't fully appreciate artwork," Pitch said in a sarcastic tone. "You know, I could see this in a museum," Pitch continued, holding his hands from his face to depict the sculpture in the frame of his grey fingers, "Maybe add some starlight to make it sparkle the way it does ... No, no, if I'm going all out, I might as well go for drama ... There will be Dreamsand near the bottom and the sand will be splattered with my Nightmaresand, causing a constant miniature battle and above it, the body of that white-haired little brat for all of the world to see!"

Pitch's daydreams were slashed by Gothel's annoyed sigh. "Too much?" Pitch asked, lowering his hands and glancing in her direction.

"We don't even have half of this plan in action, Pitchiner," Gothel began in a clipped voice, her pursed lips a thin line as she glared at Pitch. He stiffened at the name before shrugging and sitting back down in his throne.

"All will be well in time," Pitch shrugged.

"Yes, or as you keep saying," Mother Gothel snarled in impatience. "Those Guardians will do something to foil our plans and you know it! We must act drastically. Soon."

Pitch sighed and rolled his shoulders, staring at the large frozen sculpture before him. It was laced with shadow, frozen in its wake, twisted around glittering ice and forming a large spiky center piece, perfect for Pitch's cold headquarters. Pitch placed his fingertips together before standing and sliding toward the sculpture where he admired his face in the sparkling black and blue ice. "Soon," Pitch said over his shoulder to Gothel, who watched him intently. Pitch placed a hand against the ice and dug his nails in and dragged them down, leaving slash marks and a painful throbbing in his ears. "Very, very soon, indeed."

This was so long omfg but I wanted you guys to know what was happening to the rest of The Big Four and what Pitchy was up to ...

Toothless and Pitch are gonna get Jack, he better watch his back

Rapunzel's hair's back because Manny just can do that stuff because he's magic and doesn't care about how everyone will react

And Merida has a new bow that she didn't really even question BECAUSE IT WAS SO TOTALLY COOL THAT SHE JUST WENT ALONG WITH IT I MEAN SHE TURNED HER MOTHER INTO A BEAR BECAUSE SHE MET A WITCH THERE HAVE BEEN WEIRDER THINGS

I'm glad you all like it so far~ six followers and four favourites already!

Reviews are also greatly appreciated!

3. Chapter 3

Jack wasn't all up for being char-broiled with a side of beaten fish but he also didn't want to leave the poor kid alone. He'd almost drowned and Jack knew that was a traumatising experience.

Jack felt the dragon's angry gaze as he watched the boy sit up, choking on water which he coughed out into the puddles around his small frame. Jack finally got a good look at the kid, although his position really only gave Jack a nice view of his butt, which Jack wasn't going to lie, was actually a pretty good sight albeit a little small. The boy's dark auburn hair was slick with pond water and he wiped it away from his bewildered bright green eyes and wet face, gasping. His clothes, an olive green shirt topped with a leather harness and dark green pants cut off by a fur-topped boot and metal leg, were soaking and hugging his body. Jack caught himself staring intently at the boy's body, perched atop a mossy rock with his legs

criss-crossed, his hand holding up his chin. He felt a puff of hot air on the back of his neck, causing his arm to slip, along with the soft smile that had begun to play on his lips. Jack toppled off the rock, causing the dragon to give a snort before he stepped pointedly over Jack to his master, throwing Jack a very conceited look before tossing his head and his general focus to the still blubbering kid.

Hiccup stood up with the help of Toothless, before he felt a shooting pain up the stump of his leg as he stumbled slightly. He winced and cried out, his clenched fingers skitting across Toothless's scales. Toothless gave Hiccup a look of nothing but concern, but Hiccup screwed up his face and bit down his teeth, trying to make his teeth hurt more than his leg in order for his brain to focus on something other than the slick metal jabbing into his sensitive scar tissue.

Jack noticed immediately; he wasn't an idiot. Jack sat up, grabbing his staff and securely shutting the silver satchel before he remembered the hourglass, which now shone up from the bottom of the pond. Jack glanced between the pond and the boy, a sense of longing causing him to take a step towards the boy. He could come back for the hourglass later that night when he'd made sure the boy was okay.

Jack began to walk toward the boy when the dragon glanced in his direction, scowling at him with a look of utter hatred at trying to hurt his master. Jack rolled his eyes at the dragon's upfront attitude and continued to walk forward until he was a foot's length away from the dragon's tail which swished in aggravation.

The dragon let a growl slip as Jack neared closer and closer. Hiccup was already ahead of the two, wanting to get out of the forest and back home before his leg got injured any worse. Jack leaned his staff against his shoulder, walking forward with purpose before Toothless whipped his wing out, hitting Jack in the face and causing him to fall on his butt; Toothless gave a croaky laugh and hurried after Hiccup at his confused call of why he was being so slow.

Jack furrowed his eyebrows, watching the dragon swish its tail in victory. "That's what you think," Jack growled, grabbing his staff and following the dragon and boy as if he was on a mission to stay unseen, which wasn't very hard as Hiccup couldn't see him.

Hiccup mounted Toothless once again, but decided against using the metal stirrup as his leg was a major concern and it still shot up nerve signals of dull agony whenever he moved. He hooked his harness to Toothless's own and tensed, preparing for liftoff.

Toothless shot into the air like a bullet, Hiccup holding on for dear life. Jack smirked, kicking off the ground after them. In moments, he was closing in.

Toothless noticed, of course, and was not happy by it. Toothless snarled at Jack and zipped forward, his wings tucking close to his body for a faster flight rate. Jack smiled at the challenge, finding a rock formation. He flew to it, his naked feet crushing into the rough surface. Jack tensed his body and pressed his shoulders together before kicking off the formation, cracking it and sending him shooting forward in a fit of pressurized air.

He flew under the dragon and allowed the wind to push him until he was to the side of the dragon, peering at the boy with a lazy smile. Jack took on a relaxed position against the cushion of the wind, as if he were on a bed, one leg outstretched and the other bent at the knee behind the first, Jack's arm holding his head at an angle so that he could get a blissfully perfect view of the boy's tightly shut eyes and flushed cheeks. Jack stared at the boy, narrowing his eyes in confusion as he thought of how the boy's eyelashes seemed to kiss the freckles sprinkled across his cheeks. Jack hurriedly pushed the thought aside, turning back to look at him only to find that the face was missing.

"Wha-" Jack gazed down in surprise and watched the sleek dragon twist around to shoot him a smug gummy grin. Hiccup's screams caused the dragon's eyes to widen in sudden constricting fear. Jack and the dragon locked eyes before the dragon was enveloped in angry dark blue waves.

Jack shot forward, fear for the boy and determination to save him pushing him to the limits of his power. Jack hit the water, his ears popping on impact, the waves freezing in places above him before the cruel bashing of new waves broke the jagged creations to ice shards. Jack didn't pay much attention to the destruction of the ice, as he was busy trying to swim after the dragon's trail of large air bubbles.

Toothless couldn't see in the hopeless blue water. The salt in the water stung his eyes but he forced them open, trying to see where Hiccup was and if he was okay.

Hiccup couldn't breathe. He couldn't see. It was dark and it was cold and he was terrified. Hiccup clawed at his harness, trying to unclip it but his normally trained fingers were clueless in the suffocating water. Hiccup struggled to keep awake but in seconds, all he could see and feel was dark. His head lolled forward in the thrashing water and he unwillingly accepted the darkness.

Jack found Toothless immediately. The dragon's lung capacity was much stronger than an ordinary human's, so Toothless was still fully conscious, squinting through worried eyes. Jack found Hiccup's form and rushed forward to grab Hiccup; Toothless didn't fight Jack as he saw that Jack feared for Hiccup's safety as much as he did and that he actually had opposable thumbs. Jack unclipped the harnesses and pulled Hiccup into his chest, wrapping his arm around his waist and pulling him close. He swam as fast as he could to the light above the crashing waves, Toothless on his heels, using his wings and legs as an extra push out of the water.

Three heads burst through the water; only two gasped for air. Hiccup's head was slumped against Jack's shoulder and Jack willed the wind to push the water away from his legs to help him into the air; the wind did the same for the dragon, as it was obvious Toothless couldn't get out himself with the ocean raging around him.

Jack searched hurriedly for somewhere to land. His eyes spotted a beach of pebbles and large volcanic formations and darted to it. Toothless, with the help of the wind, followed Jack and landed beside him on the beach. Jack laid Hiccup down in the pebbles, staring intently at his still chest before he grabbed Hiccup's face in his

hands and began to give him mouth-to-mouth.

Toothless shrieked in anger, hitting Jack with the tip of his wing. Jack turned and glared at the dragon and yelled, "I'm saving him!" before reattaching his lips to Hiccup's own and breathing his air into Hiccup's lungs. Jack brought his lips away and pressed his hands, palm to the back of his hand, down in a repetitive fashion. Jack repeated the action, locking lips and breathing in air then pressing on his chest until Hiccup let out a choked cough.

Jack backed away as Hiccup spat salt water into the pebbles around him. Jack smiled in relief, his chest heaving, imprints of stones embedding into his knees through his pants.

Hiccup's eyes fluttered shut as he took a shaky swallow. Was that ... mint? Hiccup choked on the strong taste before looking up in a daze, expecting to see Toothless. Instead, his gold-speckled green eyes met those of bright iridescent blue. There was a shock of silvery white hair that the wind cooed through. The mystery boy was pale as ice, his dark blue short cloak covered in what looked like frost. His lowerhalf, which Hiccup hurriedly looked away from was leather, from what he could tell at a few seconds glance. Hiccup also noticed it was very snug around a region he most certainly didn't want to be caught staring at. Hiccup's eyes slid back to the boy's face; handsome and cleancut, his cheeks flushed with relief and cold. Hiccup stared at the boy's swollen lips and licked his own, tasting the mint on his tongue. Hiccup's lips were cold, as was the inside of his mouth, but he decided it had to be the cold water he'd coughed up.

"Are you okay?" The boy asked, flashing Hiccup a concerned smile that dazzeled Hiccup into awestruck silence. Hiccup noticed his gaze sticking to the boy's sparkling teeth and glanced at the boy's worried blue eyes. "Uh, yeah. I think so. What happened again?"

The boy's eyes widened in pleasant surprise and he grinned. "You can see me? Already?" Hiccup's eyebrows twitched in confusion as he nodded, "Well, yeah. Of course I can see you."

The boy closed in mouth and his gaze seemed slightly distant before he composed himself. "Of course you can see me! Why wouldn't you, I mean-" The boy cut himself off and smiled before holding a hand out to help him up. "I'm Jack, by the way."

Hiccup grabbed Jack's wrist and was pulled unsteadily to his feet. "Hiccup."

Jack's eyebrows furrowed together. "Bless you. Now, how about we look at that leg of yours?"

"No, actually ... How'd you know about my leg?" Hiccup stumbled over his words the same way he stumbled over his prosthetic. Hiccup realized it was obvious that he had only half a leg but Jack shook his head and pointed out that he was bleeding. That was probably a bad idea as when Hiccup spotted the red of blood leaking down the metal and dripping over the pebbles, he fainted. It was a good thing Jack was such a good catch.

...

In the kindom of Corona, the sun was bathing the island town in golden light, which peeked through thin curtains to rouse the villagers awake. They milled about, doing their usual rounds and chores like unpinning laundry and chatting pleasantly with neighbors.

In the royal quarters, however, was a different story, indeed, as the sleeping princess pushed herself up from the mattress and rubbed her eyes before yawning. And that was when she felt it. It brushed against her peach skin and she froze, slowly opening her wide enticing green eyes. She stared in shock at the lengths of golden hair that looped from the wooden rafters of the ceiling and draped over the canopy and the comforter. She grabbed two fists of golden hair and tugged it. She felt it pull on her head and stared at it.

The door of her bedroom was opened and a servant stepped into the room, intent on awakening the princess and her husband. The servant looked over the room that was covered in hair and stared at the frightened glossy eyes of the princess. The princess and the servant shared one single scream that awakened the entire kingdom. Just imagine her husband's shock as he woke up to his wife's screaming and the room full of golden locks.

...

The shooting route, in Merida's opinion, was one of the best. It wasn't that she had been to any other than the one her and her 'Da, Fergus, had built but she still thought extremely high of it. She loved the well-worn path, the smell of fresh dirt under Angus's hooves and the wind through her fiery hair. She also loved the feel of the new bow in her hand as she strung up arrows and shot them, right through the older ones jutting from homemade targets.

After a long ride, Angus slowed near a stream and allowed Merida to slip off and kneel beside the running water. Angus lapped up the water as Merida cupped her hands together and sipped from her makeshift bowl. She wiped her mouth with the sleeve of her cloak before she picked up her bow and inspected it. "Where did you come from," Merida mumbled under her breath, rubbing her fingers over the smooth creamy frame of the bow between her thumb and forefinger. "Where?"

Merida knew the bow in her hand had to be tied to her destiny; she was sure of it. She figured it had to be that blissful warm feeling she received when she first touched the bow. The bow fit in her hands perfectly and when she pulled back the string, it was as if she was pulling back a curtain of heat. It felt great and powerful and she felt as if she knew exactly what she was doing.

There was a sense of creeping fear deep in here mind that whispered that maybe she didn't know what she was doing. Maybe she was acting like a foolish kid, taking a bow out a fireplace as if it was nothing. Although, she had met an old witch in the woods who had given Merida a spell to change her Fate and her mum; there were weirder things than finding an enchanted bow. Was she just a scared lass hiding behind a new magical weapon or was she brave enough to use the weapon as a shield against that fear? She didn't know. All she knew was that she had something magical in her hands and she wasn't going to let magic twist her words like last time.

...

North had finished readying the sleigh, his regular thick red coat replaced with silver armor and black leather braces, his swords behind his back in their sheaths. His beard was braided and the hair behind his head tied in a stubby knot. His boots were waterproof and across North's chest were leather straps in an X-formation that held several hidden knives and surprises.

Bunny walked into the training room, Sandy beside him. Bunny had his usual getup except with leather breastplates over his chest and extra egg bombs on hand (or paw, as it would seem). Sandy sat atop a swirling mass of golden sand that could form shields, sharp weapons and medeviel devices at a simple thought, as that was what dreams were: a thought that flourished.

Tooth zipped into the room, her feathers covered in silver disks of metal; the same metal disks were over her shoulders and feathery chest that in the light glimmered with rainbows. Her feathers ruffled and spiked as she inspected a crudely curved knife. She glanced up at the other Guardians and threw the knife, imbedding itself inches from Bunny's fuzzy neck.

"You missed," Bunny pointed out, pulling his boomerang from behind his back and chucking it in Tooth's direction.

Tooth withdrew a silver chain of teeth and threw it across the room, catching the hilt of the knife. She yanked and pulled the chain closer before whipping it to block the boomerang. Tooth shot her arms out and her feathers erupted from her arms to skewer behind Bunny. Tooth flicked the whip, grabbing the boomerang and pointing the end at Bunny's heaving chest. Tooth fluttered until the boomerang end was digging into his chestplate. "No. I didn't," She handed him back his boomerang before turning away and flicking the chain of teeth once again, clasping her thin fingers around the hilt of her knife.

Bunny rolled his eyes and stepped away from the wall he'd be leaning against. He was pulled back by a feathered spike pinning his leather slash which held his egg bombs and boomerangs. Bunny grumbled and ripped the spike out, letting it drop from his clawed paws to the floor. Sandy, who had watched the exchange, shook his head in amusement and followed Tooth to where North stood.

"So ... What's the plan?" Tooth asked, uncertainty lacing her words.

North let out a heavy sigh and turned to gaze at her. "No clue."

"Should we wait?" Tooth inquired, sliding her knife back into its hidden sheath.

North shook his head, causing his beard's braids to shake. "No. We must train and be ready. Pitch could strike any moment."

"Yeah, Pitch could. Are we just going to wait for that to happen, North?" Bunny interjected his opinion, his bushy eyebrows furrowed and arms crossed. "Are we going to just sit around and wait for Pitch to steal away our belief until we're defenseless? _Again?_ We don't

have Jack to save our skins this time."

North nodded, his face darkening. "It won't come to that. We will train until we can fight Pitch on our own until Jack and the other Defenders get here."

Bunny gave North a steely glare. "And, what if Jack doesn't come back, North? What if he realises he likes these Defenders better and doesn't want to help us anymore?"

Tooth shot Bunny a sharp look. "Jack wouldn't do that."

"How do you know, Tooth? How? Jack's mad at us for letting him leave. These Defenders are his age and he'd have much more fun with them," Bunny snarled bitterly before his snout twitched and his gaze softened as he stared down at the floor.

"Bunny, we miss him, too," Tooth comforted, stepping forward and rubbing his arm where the armor didn't cover. He shrugged away her hand and muttered, "Just ... What if Pitch wins this time? What are we going to do?"

"I don't know, Bunny," Tooth continued. "We'll think of something. We always do."

"We had Jack last time," Bunny snapped.

"Jack is not gone, Bunny," North said, eyebrows knitting. "Jack is getting help. Time does not phase him where he is and it won't damage our plans."

"Yeah, our plans of kicking each other's asses," Bunny swore and left the room to blow off steam and throw boomerangs at the elves.

North, Tooth and Sandy watched him go. Bunny's words hung in the air like staglimates and the three didn't dare move a muscle, for fear that they would fall and impale them. Eventually, they tore their eyes from the door Bunny had stomped through and went back to training for a battle they were afraid they'd lose.

****Alright, so let me get some things straight:****

****This will be a Hijack story.****

****That mouth-to-mouth bit with Jack and Hiccup was strictly an I'm-saving-your-life-because-I'm-a-complete-dumbass moment. And Hiccup didn't even remember it. (sorry for crushing your feels)****

****Hiccup can see Jack either because of Jack's breathing life into him or maybe because I didn't want it to seem like Hiccup was making out with air. You'll never know which.****

****Headcanon: Jack knows how to do CPR because he's actually gone to lessons (invisibly, of course) and he learned mainly because he was curious about how much preventing death has grown since he died. He also didn't want anyone else to die by drowning as he did.****

****For the main part of the story, it will follow Jack and Hiccup to further develop their friendship/relationship and it might switch to**

the other Defenders whom Jack hasn't visited yet or the Guardians or Pitch and his master scheme. Then, Jack will go to the other Defenders and rally them up.**

So, yeah. Most of that's covered and I'm sorry if it's confusing at all; PM me and I'll explain it further.

I'm really happy with your guys' reaction with this. I really hope you all like it although it may take a long while for the true plotline to be released. I'm also thinking of changing a bit of Hiccup's past to which he confides to Jack in.

I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

4. Chapter 4

Jack had much more trouble getting Hiccup unseen through the village than he'd expected. After an internal battle with himself, Jack decided he'd just have to wing it. Literally.

Jack turned to the dragon beside him as they both hid behind a small hut, Hiccup in Jack's arms. "Look," Jack said, turning to Toothless, who, noticing the urgency in Jack's tone, listened intently to his words, "We need to get this kid to his house and fast. That leg of his isn't going to get any better if we stand out here and wait to get caught. And to tell you the truth, I don't want to get cornered by a bunch of Vikings when I look like I've stepped out of the modern world. Which, I sort of did but that's not the point. Will you help me or what?"

Toothless's bright green eyes shone with a clear message: Only for Hiccup. Jack shrugged, as the dragon's reluctant cooperation was better than nothing at all. "Okay, now here's the plan. You ..."

Toothless edged away from the hut and began to awkwardly walk through the village, his wings pinched closed to his back in order to conceal the two boys. The Vikings glanced at Toothless in confusion, noticing the lack of Hiccup's presence. However, if they thought the dragon's behavior was strange, they didn't make a move to apprehend it in any more detail than a few seconds glance. That was, until Astrid saw the midnight black beast.

She strode forward, expecting to see Hiccup with the dragon but was sadly mistaken. She furrowed her eyebrows and tapped the dragon's leathery wing, startling the dragon and causing it to jump.

"Um, hi, Toothless," Astrid said, noting the odd pinch in the dragon's wings and the wide guilty eyes that stared at her with a hint of impatience. "Where's Hiccup?"

The dragon gave her a look as if to ask if she was an idiot and suddenly gave a growl. Astrid backed away from Toothless, her hands raised, palm out, in defense.

The reason for the dragon's snarl was Jack, who had tried to peek past the wings at the girl who glanced over her shoulder at the dragon, her brow furrowed and mouth set in a thin line, as she hurriedly walked away, grumbling under her breath. Jack had slipped

slightly and his nails had dug under a few of Toothless's scales. Jack whispered a "sorry" and Toothless was on his way again, going to the back of Hiccup's own hut, at least that was what Jack suspected it was.

Jack slipped off of Toothless, holding his hands out to use his force to keep Hiccup in place (which Jack actually has, with his will over the wind). Hiccup stayed where he was and Jack turned to open the giant door and let the dragon inside.

Jack followed the dragon, before a surge of heat hit him in the face. Jack coughed and stepped back, winded at the sudden difference in temperature. Toothless turned, watching the boy struggle to step into the room and then hit the wall as far from the fire as possible. Toothless opened his wings to reveal Hiccup's body and gave Jack a pointed look for him to come take off the extra weight.

Jack sighed and edged to the dragon, who didn't make it any easier for him by stepping closer. No, it seemed as if the dragon stepped away everytime Jack seemed to get closer. Jack realized the game and smiled, pressing his hand to the wall. The start of icy ferns blossomed underneath Jack's palm before stretching across the wall and glazing the floor underneath Jack's bare feet. "You wanna play hard to get?" Jack shouted across the fire to Toothless who shivered at the sudden cold.

Jack slid over the slick ground and chased after the dragon in a bizarre game of tag. Toothless shrieked and stumbled over the ice, trying to use his wings but all that did was dim the fire's light and warmth. All was quiet in the hut as Toothless gazed around the darkened room before a cold finger jabbed him in the back of his head. "You're it."

Jack picked Hiccup off Toothless's back and walked him to a makeshift bed that was about Hiccup's size. He laid Hiccup on it and tugged the fur blanket over his puny frame. Jack took a seat at the bottom of the bed and thought for a moment. How would he explain this to Hiccup?

Toothless watched Jack with unblinking emerald eyes as Jack thought over his situation. "Oh, yeah, you might've drowned twice in one day and your leg-" HIS LEG, Jack jumped from his spot on the floor and ripped the blanket from Hiccup before trying to undo the metal contraption strapped over his bleeding stump. Toothless perked up at the sudden panic that strung high in the icy air and hurried over to see what Jack was doing.

Jack finally got it off, but by then, Hiccup's leg was bleeding profoundly and Jack had no clue what to do. He ran around the house, looking for something - anything - to stop the bleeding. His sweatshirt rubbed against him and he looked down at it, biting his lip and glancing at the boy's leg before ripping it over his head and pressing the frosted material to the stump. The part of the sweatshirt he'd pressed to Hiccup's bleeding leg was now purple and growing. Jack sighed, reminding himself that he could always get a new hoodie but Hiccup couldn't get a new leg other than the metal one. Jack pressed harder until it seemed as if the bleeding episode was over.

After a while of Jack staring solemnly down at the purple mess of

fabric in his hands, Hiccup stirred, rewrapped in his fur blanket. Toothless rubbed his face to Hiccup's and Hiccup groaned, trying to push Toothless away.

Jack turned, the ruined sweatshirt in his hands forgotten. Hiccup reluctantly opened his eyes and shivered violently at the cold. His eyes searched for an open window or door, but there weren't any. The fire was still big and bright, leaving Hiccup in confusion. Then he caught a glance of silvery white hair and blue eyes.

Hiccup looked over at the boy and it all came rushing back. The ocean, the beach scene, their meeting, the cold on his lips and blacking out at the sight of his own blood. Hiccup, not feeling the cold of the metal leg, pulled his blanket away to reveal his bruised stump. Hiccup sighed at it and looked back to the boy.

The boy smiled and at that smile, Hiccup remembered his name: Jack. It was an odd name, especially here in Berk; Hiccup suspected he was from a different Viking clan and must've come on a ship and noticed Hiccup not breathing. Hiccup had no recollection of getting on the beach or how his leg had gotten hurt, he just knew that Jack had saved him and he was grateful.

"So ... Jack ... How'd you get in here?" Hiccup began awkwardly, noticing Jack's odd clothing. He wore a light cream long sleeve shirt, made from material Hiccup had never seen before. Over that was a leather vest with odd circles of brown that seemed to slip into slits on the other side of the vest. Hiccup thought Jack's choice in clothing was odd but seemed to fit him nicely. Hiccup glanced at the blob of purple and blue clothing at the foot of his bed and recognized it as what Hiccup had first seen Jack wear; blood was seeping under it and Hiccup knew for a fact it was his own and that Jack had used it to stop the bleeding.

"Your dragon showed me the way," Jack said, glad to see Hiccup awake again. Toothless's eyes widened at the accusation and gave an indignant roar.

Hiccup turned to Toothless and kidded, "Glad I can count on you, Toothless. He could've been a sadistic Viking!" After a moment of silent uncertainty, Hiccup glanced through his hair to Jack and asked, "You're not ... Are you?"

Jack laughed and shook his head, pulling a knee up for him to perch his elbow on. "No, I don't think so. Last time I checked I wasn't, at least." Jack smiled to show Hiccup he was joking and Hiccup grinned back before his smile faded slightly as Hiccup's eyes gazed down at Jack's ruined purple mass of cloth.

"I'm really sorry about that," Hiccup mumbled, glancing at Jack. "The ships bring in material like that; I could try to make you a new one."

Jack smiled and shook his head. "No, no, it's fine. Don't worry about it."

There was an uneasy silence and then Hiccup asked, "Where are you from? I mean, I haven't seen you around and I think I'd remember that hair."

Jack ran his hand through said hair and racked his mind for a back story. _"I'm from modern-day America. You don't know what America is since it hasn't been colonized yet. I'm also here because we have a bit of a problem; Pitch Black, you know, The Boogeyman, he's kind of in power again and you're a Defender and Guardian of Childhood and I was sent here by the Man in the Moon to get you and two others heroes so the world doesn't fall back into The Dark Age. I'm also dead."

—

Jack didn't say any of that, of course. He didn't want to look completely insane. Instead Jack shrugged. "This color's normal where I'm from."

Hiccup stared at him. "You're from Jotunheim?"

Jack stared back before quickly saying, "Yeah. That's what it's called. Now, my question. What exactly _is_ your name?"

Hiccup decided to ignore Jack's weird behaviour (he blamed it on the freezing temperatures in Jotunheim) and answered, "My name's Hiccup. Hiccup Horrendous Haddock The Third, to be precise."

Jack had to bite down on his tongue to prevent from asking if Hiccup's parents hated him; in retrospect, maybe naming your kid after a human function was normal for Vikings or they wanted to toughen their kids up by giving them names that would get them tormented in a modern-day learning environment.

"That's a bit of a mouthful," Jack said, smiling.

Hiccup nodded, glancing away. "You can just call me Hiccup. That's what my friends do. That's what everyone does, actually."

Jack grinned. "We're friends?"

Hiccup seemed surprised by the question. "Well, you did save my life."

Twice, Jack thought. _I also kind of caused it, but you don't need to know that._

Toothless, annoyed by the lack of attention, barked out a sharp roar. Hiccup turned to him and held out his arms. "C'mere, buddy," Hiccup said and Toothless grinned gumily and leapt forward, his front paws on the bed and his head nuzzling Hiccup's playfully.

Jack watched the two for a moment and felt a smile tug at his lips. There was so much affection between the dragon and the boy that Jack almost joined in on it but there was a thought that stopped him.

You're on a mission. Not a vacation. You can't waste your time making friends, Jack.

Jack inner voice laughed at the first one. _There's no rule that I can't have fun while I'm here; if there was one, I'd break it. Simple as that._

...

The kingdom of Corona was not aware of the panic welling inside the palace. However, the news was leaking from every crack of the palace walls; it was whisked away by the wind and whispered into the ears of the early risers, who then reported to their families and friends.

It was the gossip of the town in mere moments; Princess Rapunzel Fitzherbert's hair had magically grown back over night, even the strand that had been cut as a child. It was as if it had never been snipped at all.

The palace was on high-alert ever since the scream broke the night like it was a pane of glass, its clear shards like piercing octaves that shot higher and higher until the scream grew into unbelieving sobs and then silence.

To say that The King and Queen were surprised would be a severe understatement. This hair was what had given them their daughter, which they were grateful, although it was also the reason for eighteen years of not knowing where their daughter was or even if she was alive. That pain was worse than death.

Eugene had been the first to react when he'd been startled awake; he called for the palace guards as he tried to calm Rapunzel down, although Eugene was having trouble keeping his voice at one level pitch and his heart from clenching in panic. All Eugene could think of were two things: it would be really weird in bed now with seventy feet of hair to get in the way and the fact that in his (not so) final moments he had given her a 'trim' that they had both finally been getting used to. But, here it was, again, gleaming up at Eugene like the gold he used to steal. He wasn't a thief, not anymore, as the old habit had died hard with him only last year but he was still trying to overcome the shock of it. How could all of that hair grow back after one night?

The King was thinking the same thing. The hair had been magical from the start; could the magic just regenerate the hair or was it something completely different than the magical flower?

There was another thought on The King's mind, one that made him want to remove his high position as father and King so that he could choke on his own tears; what would happen once people like the one who had stolen his daughter away heard of the news?

Everyone looked to The King for advice in times of panic but now, he was the one who needed advice. He didn't know what to do and with his daughter at risk once again; he was afraid of messing up their chances at rekindling their relationship with their daughter.

The King did something most of the guards didn't expect: he ripped away his mask of blank emotions and took a seat beside his wife, daughter and son-in-law and engulfed them in a tight comforting hug as tears pricked his eyes.

...

Merida walked through the kitchen doors, a cake stuffed in her mouth as she entered the feasting area where her parents and brothers were seated. Her brothers scowled down at their haggis and roots; her mother and father conversing over the other three clans and private

matters throughout DunBrouch.

Merida took a seat and glanced at her own plate of haggis before sighing and turning her attention to her parents' conversation. She only caught bits and pieces that went through one ear and out the next so she turned back to her plate and bit into a root, chewing it. Merida remembered her new bow and turned to her parents, her face alight. Her mother noticed and turned, smiling. "Yes, Merida?"

"Guess what I did today," She sang, her food forgotten.

Her mother raised an eyebrow, asking herself a silent question: Would she see eye-to-eye with whatever Merida had done or would the relationship she'd built with her daughter flake away?

"I took Angus out for a ride," Merida began, beaming, "Shot my bow." Merida was practically bursting from the held information of her new bow, but she didn't mention it. She had a feeling it wasn't something she should flaunt to her parents about; it wasn't every day you found a magical bow tied to your destiny.

"How many bulls-eyes, lass?" Fergus asked, his blue eyes alight with the same glow as his daughter's.

"All of them," Merida grinned in pride.

"That's my girl," Fergus laughed before turning to the boys. "None of you have touched your haggis!"

They all squirmed under his gaze and he shrugged. "More for me, slide them over, c'mon," Fergus cheered the boys as they slid their plates to their father, who didn't actually get the chance to indulge himself in the sheep's stomachs as the two wiry-furred mutts raced in and grabbed them.

...

The Man in the Moon watched the four Defenders via moonbeam, rubbing his chin once again. The chin rubbing was a bad habit, he had to admit, but he'd gotten so used to it over the past decades that he simply couldn't break it.

He knew Jack was going to need to get comfortable with the Defenders before he out and told them why he was really there. The Man in the Moon stood and thought for a moment before a lightbulb went off in his head.

"Ah," The Man in the Moon hopped from his floating stool to beckon to a moonbeam. "Call Father Time and ask if he's busy. I have an idea."

...

Father Time materialized in The Moonship, moonbeams popping under his shiny shoes. He wore a sharp pinstripe suit, his hair styled professionally and permanent seven o'clock shadow trimmed to stunning precision. His shoes met the floor and he greeted the Man with a raised eyebrow.

The Man in the Moon clapped his pale hands and smiled, his swirl of hair bouncing as he stepped forward. "You came earlier than I expected, Timothy."

"Yes, well, always fashionably early, that's me," Tim said, casually tugging his sleeve over a black scythe tattoo.

The Man in the Moon frowned; it looked odd on the man's usually kindly face. "Oh no, you didn't do ... that before you came here, did you?"

Father Time shrugged and glanced at the Man with tired golden eyes. "Every mortal's life comes to an end, I'm afraid. Sadly, I'm the only one to dirty my hands with disposing of them as Happy is 'far too young to frolic in the affairs of mortal death.'" Father Time sighed heavily, rubbing his temples; in the moonlight, his face seemed to crinkle in wrinkles and worry lines and his dark hair seemed to gleam grey. In a moment, it was gone and Father Time looked young and healthy although his gold eyes betrayed him and showed generations of sadness and built stress. "What was it you wanted, Tsar?"

"I was wondering if perhaps you could freeze time," The Man in the Moon began and hurriedly continued at Tim's widened gold eyes that resembled the backs of pocket watches. "You see, I need more time for the Defenders to group. I wouldn't want to rush them as it is certain that they'd need to care for one another."

"I suppose I could ask Old Man Winter," Tim thought for a second and nodded. "He does owe me ... Sure, I'll do it. Just keep Heat Miser as far away from me as possible and you've got yourself a deal."

The Man in the Moon raised an eyebrow in amusement. "What have you done to him?"

"Let's just say he's still in his awkward stage," Tim smirked. "I'm sure it's only a phase." Tim's eyebrows arched as he glanced at the wristwatch on his right hand. "It was great seeing you again, Tsar, but alas, time waits for no one. Anything else before I go?"

The Man in the Moon pressed his lips together. "Do you still have your aurora signal?" Tim nodded and the Man continued, "Make sure the rest do, as well. I may need you all in the-

"-future. Yes, Tsar, I know. I am Father Time, after all." With that, Tim pulled on a chain around his neck. It was a collection of gold and bronze disks; in the center of it was a small hourglass of silver sand. He twirled the disks until they were whipping the air and nodded his good-bye to the Man before he was sucked into a portal that popped open under his feet.

The Man in the Moon sighed and glanced at his own aurora signal, the chubby outline of his handprint still etched in the dust. He had a feeling he'd be pulling it again soon.

****So many time puns you go Tim****

****Headcanon: Jack wears his colonial clothes under his hoodie because it's a memory of his past and what he awoke in so he decided to keep it (it also makes it easier to explain when he's in Berk and the following places since he doesn't have to try to explain the future**

of the cotton industry).**

While I'm here, I should explain that in my version of these legends, Old Man Winter and Jack aren't the same person. Winter's been around since The Golden Age and Jack's part of the Defenders/Guardians so they really don't like to cross paths (Winter thinks Jack's up to trouble and Jack thinks Winter's a cranky old guy).

I figured Rapunzel's reaction to her hair was granted, I mean, how the **_hell **_**does that happen. I'm trying not to make her seem ditzzy (as she really isn't) but her reaction may seem that way. It's called shock; look it up please.**

I'm also sorry for ruining Jack's hoodie but Jack had to do it. His hoodie was too much for the time when everyone can see him and they'd all get suspicious so I just got rid of it. But let me tell you, he's having a conniption. He'll just have to deal with it.

EIGHTEEN REVIEWS, SIXTEEN FOLLOWS AND TWELVE FAVOURITES. YOU. ARE. ALL. AMAZING. AND. LET. ME. LOVE. YOU.

5. Chapter 5

Astrid walked up a dirt path to Hiccup's, her armor glistening in the autumn sunlight through the trees. She stopped near the door and rapped her fist against the door. She brought her cold knuckles away and yelled through the door, "Hiccup! Wake up or I'll wake you up myself!"

There was no answer and Astrid groaned, shoving the door open and walking into the room. It was freakishly cold in Hiccup's house which caused Astrid's eyebrows to knit as she glanced over the embers and ash swirling in the hearth. Toothless, who was curled up across from the door, opened an eye and watched her silently; this was her usual morning routine. She stomped to Hiccup's bed and was about to rip the covers away when she noticed an extra sleeping form. She turned slightly and caught a glimpse of silver flares against fur blankets. The extra form sat up and rubbed his eyes before glancing up and noticing Astrid who, without any warning, leapt forward and tackled him.

Jack scrambled backward in the blankets, trying to shove the girl's hands as far from his throat as possible. She grabbed a tuft of silver hair in her fist and he winced before kicking her in the knee and shoving her away. Jack jumped to his feet, his hands up in surrender. Astrid yelled a battle cry before slugging Jack in the stomach, causing him to fall in pain. The whole time, Toothless croakily snickered and watched the episode from behind his clawed paws.

Hiccup was up, trying to wriggle his prosthetic on while yelling at Astrid. He finally got it partly on and leapt at her, grabbing her by the arms. "Astrid! ASTRID! He's a friend!"

Jack, who was still recovering from the low blow to his gut, struggled to stand. He eventually did and watched as Hiccup held Astrid around the waist, his nails digging into her arms to make her listen to him. Jack felt a pang of ... No. He wasn't jealous. He

wasn't.

Astrid calmed enough for Hiccup to let her go. Astrid sighed and adjusted her armor, glancing at Jack who held his abdomen with tight white-knuckled fingers. She turned back to Hiccup and raised an eyebrow before nodding her head in Jack's direction.

"Astrid, Jack," Hiccup motioned with his hand to each other and added, "Jack stayed here last night; he doesn't have a hut or anything so I figured he could stay for the time being. I'll just have to ask my Dad."

Astrid rolled her shoulders and shrugged, glancing at Jack. "What's with his ... everything?"

Jack glanced down at his colonial clothes and swept a hand uneasily through his hair. Hiccup pulled Astrid aside and muttered, "He's from Jotunheim, Astrid."

Astrid raised an eyebrow. "He looks a little cleancut for that place, don't you think?"

Hiccup rolled his eyes and snapped his fingers to regain her attention. "He said he's from Jotunheim, so he's from Jotunheim, Astrid."

Astrid shrugged and nodded. "Fine. What's he going to do while you're gone?"

Hiccup hopefully started, "I thought maybe he could come to training-"

"_Hiccup_," Astrid began.

"No, come on, listen. We always need new dragon trainers and it'll help him meet people," Hiccup tried.

Astrid stared at Hiccup's bright hopeful eyes and groaned. "Fine, fine, whatever. Just don't let him near Stormfly, alright? I don't want his blood on my conscience."

Hiccup grinned and hugged her before thanking her a dozen times. She rolled her eyes but couldn't help the smile on her face.

...

After Hiccup had forced Jack into a pair of hide boots, the four (including Toothless) made their way outside to the training arena, a deep hole that had served as a dragon arena where the best Vikings would fight against dragons for pride and glorified lives. That was, until Hiccup and Toothless showed the world of Vikings that dragons weren't the problem; the people and the fear were.

Jack stumbled down the dirt slope into the arena. They passed under an iron gate and Jack was about to follow Hiccup and Astrid inside when Toothless pushed in beside Jack and they struggled to both get through the entrance at once. Eventually the dragon wrenched his way inside, leaving Jack flushed from the uncalled for exercise. Jack sighed before he continued on his way into the arena. Jack glanced around, noticing painted wooden shields hanging from walls not lined

in the same iron gating as the entrance.

There was a small group of people already there; two guys and two girls, at least that was what Jack saw from a distance. They all turned when Hiccup and Astrid walked in and were greeted by an annoyed, "You're late!"

They got in closer and that was when the other four seemed to notice Jack, who lagged slightly behind as he glanced at the teenagers before him. There was no doubt in his mind that they were Vikings but the horned helmets defiantly helped.

"Who's this?" One of the girls with braided blonde hair came forward and peered at Jack, who backed away slightly as she glanced him over. She gave him a tentative sniff before the other girl shoved her away, smirking jeeringly.

She sneered, "Oh, Hiccup, you shouldn't have! Fresh meat for the Nightmares, how kind!"

Jack froze and asked, "Wait. Nightmares?"

The girl, who Jack later found out was really the male twin of the girl with the braids, nodded and smirked. "The Nightmares get pretty hungry after terrorizing villages and burning down homes and ..."

Astrid rolled her eyes and glanced at Jack, who had gone deathly pale, even paler than he originally was. She broke her tough facade to say, "Tuffnut's kidding, Jack. They don't do that anymore."

Astrid's form of comforting didn't do much to ease Jack's sudden anxiety. He'd never actually met a dragon until yesterday and at their meeting, Jack had almost accidentally drowned his master twice. The mention of Nightmares also didn't help Jack's nerves; he was still shaken by Pitch's leap for power last year.

In order to not seem like a complete and utter wimp, Jack smiled broadly. It was obviously flakey to Hiccup and Astrid, who shared a suddenly uneasy glance, but not to the other Vikings. "Bring it on," Jack said boldly to Tuffnut who sneered and clapped him on the shoulder.

"If you survive, we should get along just fine," Tuffnut said coolly before pushing Jack several feet before an iron gate. He smirked and patted Jack's back before the biggest Viking yelled, "Wait! We need to go over safety precautions!"

Tuffnut groaned as the guy ran up to Jack and began to give him a lengthy interrigation, "Okay, well, we go over safety to make sure everyone knows what they're walking into ... So, have you ever trained a dragon before?"

Jack shook his head.

"Um ... Have you ever ridden a dragon?" Fishlegs tried; usually the questions never got further than the first one, as most Vikings had some basic expirience.

Jack figured flying was the same thing as riding a dragon, so he

nodded. "Yeah, well, I've done something like it."

The answer was vague enough for Fishlegs to ask, "...Have you, um, ever _seen_ a dragon before coming here?"

Jack would've been offended had the question been false. "_Well..._" Jack trailed off, rubbing his neck. Jack had seen plenty of dragon illustrations when he read storybooks to Jamie. They were splashed in lucid colors with talons and teeth and fiery spit that seemed to radiate heat from the page; but that was it. They were only made scarier by your imagination.

Once, Jamie had asked Jack if dragons were real if he was. It had been late spring when Jamie had asked and Jack had shrugged and told him, "I suppose so." If Jamie knew that Jack was about to train a dragon, he would most likely force Jack to take him to Berk. But Jamie only saw dragons through pages of books, not the real thing; Jack's stomach twisted painfully as he stared at the group of Vikings who had huddled together at Jack's obvious cluelessness.

"This guy's a complete amauter, Hiccup," Snoutlout muttered. "He has no expirience at all."

"None of us did in the beginning," Hiccup began.

"Yeah, but this guy ... He doesn't know _anything_. At least when we started training dragons, we knew their weaknesses and their strengths from The Book. Now The Book's gone," Fishlegs started nervously, wringing his chubby hands.

Hiccup winced at the reminder of the missing Book of Dragons. "Yes ... I know. But, we can teach him."

"Hiccup, he won't last a minute out there," Ruffnut cut in right as her brother said, "You know, I think we should give a chance."

The five other Vikings turned to give Tuffnut a slightly incredulous look. "Look, all I'm saying is this guy could be better than we think. We've seen wimps pull off training dragons better than bigger guys all the time - look at Hiccup here."

They all rolled their eyes at Tuffnut's snide comment of Hiccup's size. Hiccup sighed and was about to say something when Toothless gave a warning wail.

The six Vikings whirled around to find Jack face-to-face with a Monstrous Nightmare. How it'd gotten out, they didn't want to know. They were suddenly armed and Hiccup called, "Jack! Don't do anything _"

"- Stupid, I know," Jack said, insecting the Nightmare from his close range. It looked nothing like the dragons from the stories Jack had read. For one, it had one of the longest necks Jack had ever seen along with lengthy black horns; its giant maw large enough to eat Jack whole in just one bite, if it felt like it. Its leathery wings were connected to its front paws, much like a bat's; the dragon's four gangly feet scraped against the dirt floor with curved talons that reminded Jack of meat hooks. Smoke huffed out of its nose as it glared into Jack's face. Jack was hit with the heat and remembered something he hadn't thought of: What would happen if this dragon

opened fire and Jack couldn't get out of the way quick enough? Would the winter spirit melt or would he writhe in mortal agony?

Jack hadn't even seen the thing coming; it slipped from the shadows from one of the holes in the walls of the arena. Its gate hadn't been locked and it'd just snuck up on Jack while he'd been inspecting something on the dirt floor; a familiar something. The same something that had latched onto the beast's tail in the dark of the gated enclosure and was now speeding up the dragon's back.

"Black sand," Jack whispered under his breath. "You can't be serious."

The Vikings watched in horror as the black infused in the Nightmare's purple skin. In all of their years of being around dragons, they'd never seen anything like it. It looked like a plague from where they stood, a cloud of flies attaching to the life and sucking it out.

The dragon's eyes were fully gold now, sparkling with golden sand grains. Jack watched as the iris was engulfed in the golden flash of sand, its body coated in black. Jack stared at it, barely even daring to take a breath.

Hiccup watched in panic as Jack stood before the black Nightmare. Jack stared it down, which Hiccup immediately knew was a bad idea, as Monstrous Nightmares were the most prideful of all the dragons, but Fishlegs beat him to it.

"Jack! Don't stare it in the eye," He whisper-screamed across the arena to Jack, who in the dead silence, heard his words perfectly.

"No, don't do that! You can't show any weakness," Ruffnut argued silently.

"You two aren't helping," Jack muttered between his tightly closed jaws. Jack racked his mind for something to help him in this situation and asked between his teeth, "What's a Nightmare's form of attack?"

Fishlegs began the second the words left Jack's lips, "Monstrous Nightmares use this form of attack called the 'Fire Jacket', where they light their entire bodies on fire. They also have talons and teeth and they use their tails as clubs. They're very proud and incredibly strong."

Jack had to force himself not to shudder at the mention of the 'Fire Jacket'.

"How about that black stuff?" Snoutlout asked.

"I ... don't know what that is," Fishlegs began, confusion evident in his voice. Fishlegs had never not known anything.

Jack tried to think past the certain death he was facing and try to conjure ideas. The first he thought of was fun. But, how was Jack going to use fun to his advantage here? With six Vikings nervously watching?

Jack couldn't possibly make it snow, not now with the skies perfectly clear. He couldn't glaze the dirt in frost; that'd get questions Jack couldn't answer. Jack glanced at the overwhelming black sand and the smoke swirling out of the crocodile nostrils, sand bubbling over its nose.

Jack glanced at the sand, noticing the red-rimmed black liquid over the dragon's snout. Jack's lips parted in the start of a smile. That was it! Sand, when heated, turned into glass, no matter the time in history.

Jack closed his eyes and thought for a moment. How would he be able to aggravate the dragon enough for it to light itself aflame? Jack could hear Bunny retort in his mind: "Be yourself, mate. That's enough for me."

Jack smirked and heard his voice say, "Now, buddy, we're gonna have a little fun. How about that?"

The dragon snorted a puff of smoke and growled slightly as Jack held his arms out and smirked; Snoutlout and Ruffnut stared at him and in unison asked, "What is he doing?" "How about we play a little game of what I like to call Hot and Cold Tag? It's simple really. You chase me, I chase you, whoever gets tagged is hot or cold." _Cold as in freezing or hot as in burnt to a crisp. _**(I made this up guys don't judge me)**

Jack gazed into the dragon's eyes, waiting for something, anything. Instead, the dragon opened its crocodile jaws to reveal rows of jagged bone and the licking of fire between molars, like red-hot toothbrush bristles.

Jack laughed and hopped away, ducking as a stripe of fire swiped the air where Jack's head had been. "You gotta be quicker than that!" Jack yelled before ripping a shield off of the wall and throwing it at the dragon like a frisbee, which hit the dragon hard in the side of its head. The shield was then chomped at and reduced to splinters that dug into the dragon's tongue.

Jack and the dragon played this game for a while; Jack almost losing several limbs from time to time. Eventually, most of the dragon's face was incased in black budding glass and the rest of the sand slipped away to the ground and began to form words that only Jack could read, as they were in English and not Norse; _Beware the black nightmares._

...

"_That _was all you did?" Mother Gothel shrieked. She was furious at Pitch's lack of action. "You had him right in your hands a-and you let him just get away!"

Pitch rolled his eyes at Gothel's overdramatics. "Gothel, why _must _you question my motives?"

The two were standing together in the dark; somewhere in Pitch's dark palace. Everything looked exactly the same there; dark, cruel and writhing with a mass of shadows watching their every movement.

"Well, oh, I don't know, maybe because you've tried to prevail over the Guardians _three _times and failed each? Or maybe because in all these years of solitude you've grown soft? Is that it, Pitchner? Do you have a bit of a soft spot for the boy, hmm?" Gothel crooned, her face bathed in dark light from a splash of slanted light from the ceiling far above; even up there, the light wasn't safe from the shadows. They stretched their claws into the burning light and shrieked in pain, leaning over to the other side of the hole until it was covered in screaming darkness.

"Gothel, need I remind you, I can take you out just as I brought you in," Pitch snarled. "You are but a mere chess peice in this game, the Queen of Black; however, the Queen can always be overthrown and replaced." The light sliced through the darkness to reveal Pitch's snarling face, inches from Gothel's. She had to refrain from taking a step away. "Now, now," Pitch purred, brushing his fingers against a coarse black curl, "Don't worry a hair on your pretty head, Gothel. I know exactly what I'm doing. By the end of this, you'll have your flower back in safe hands and I'll have my Blackjack."

"What will become of the other two?" Gothel asked, arching an eyebrow.

"Patience," Pitch started, a smile curling on his lips. "All will come in due time."

...

Father Time walked down a chilly street in London, his hands deep in the pockets of the trench coat he'd stuffed them in. In only a few moments, Tim knew the entire history of its walls and its houses, its people and of its past. He also foresaw the future, the good and the bad.

Tim passed a group of vagrants in dirty clothes, moth-eaten schawls, knuckle gloves, each hiding their distant eyes behind masses of wiry beards and shaggy hair. Tim stopped and could see in those eyes their hopes and dreams, crushed underfoot; their lives torn from them until they were nothing but shells of their former selves. Tim stepped toward their bin fire and tossed a wad of money at each of their holey-shoed feet. "It gets better," Tim promised before he turned away from their shocked faces and constant 'bless you!'s and continued on his way down the frosted street.

Tim walked down the sidewalk, his mind deadpanning information of the past, present and future: there had been a car crash there, a lucky meeting which blossomed into love here, there would be a fight here where a man would lose a permanant tooth (and Tooth would chew and spit Tim out for not preventing it) and a strike of inspiration through that rain-streaked cafe window. Time was all around him, under his feet, in the air, gleaming across the giant clockface of Big Ben. Time was ticking down and all Tim could do was stare at his shoes.

"Sir," A voice piped up to his left, "Care to spare a penny?"

Tim turned to the man beside him. He was wearing the same clothing as one of the vagrants from the bin fire and stared imploringly at Tim.

"I think _you're _the one to owe me the penny, Hibernus," Tim began, "Give me my pocketwatch. Now."

The man sighed and dug through his dirty cloths before pulling a shiny pocketwatch from within them. He dangled the chain on his fingers and tossed it at Tim. "Didn't have a care for it, really, what with that giant clock over there," Hibernus cocked his head to Big Ben as Tim caught the watch.

"You can never have too much time," Tim shrugged, wrapping the chain and slipping it into his pocket.

The two were silent, walking side-by-side, ice fluttering down from the mass of clouds above them. "Can I ask why you're here, Tim?"

"Can I not just be visiting an old friend?" Tim asked, smirking slightly.

"Us? Friends? Hardly," Hibernus muttered under his icy breath.

"You caught me, then," Tim said, glancing at the man beside him. "Do you remember that favor you promised you'd return?"

Hibrernus groaned. "Yes, I do."

"Well, I need that favor," Tim began.

"What do you need, then?" Hibernus asked suspsiously.

"A bit of ice."

"What do you need my ice for?" Hibernus stopped walking forward and turned to Tim.

"Curious, are we?" Tim stopped in line with Hibernus. "The information is classified for the time being, Hibernus. I can't disclose any of it." _Espically with you, _Tim thought as he watched Hibernus' lips curl then press together.

"Very well," Hibernus said, his eyes slits under snowy brows. Hibernus dug in his dirty folds and pulled out a shard of blue ice. "Is this enough?"

Tim nodded, taking the shard. "For now, it is."

"Anything else?" Hibernus asked, watching Tim's lips purse. He was obviously thinking something.

"Nothing at all," Tim said, before turning away. "I've got to run. Don't stay out too long, Hibernus. You might catch a cold."

"I've had a cold since The Dark Days, Tim."

...

Father Time glanced through the clockface of Big Ben, the Sands of Time filtering behind him; the continous tick of the clock and falling sand grains filled the silence like a soundtrack. Father Time turned to the Sands of Time and flicked the ice sharp into the air;

it spun in the air as Tim opened the top of the hourglass and snapped his fingers. The ice shard stopped spinning and landed in the grains of sand, painting them soft blue.

The sand grains in the hourglass froze in mid-filter; the giant clockface's hands stopped mid-tock. Tim ducked under iron and bronze gears to look through the illuminated clockface to the city of London below. The snow was blotches of white peppering the sky; frost clung to the clockface. The city below was as frozen as the sky above.

Tim sighed and looked out the clockface. He turned away from the hourglass to a globe. Tim willed the frozen Sands to flow from the hourglass into the air; the silvery blue sand spun circles around him and the globe; the globe began to spin feverishly counter-clockwise, lights fizzling and reigniting until Tim was staring at what was a past Europe. He willed the sand to latch over a spot in Scotland. The globe began to swirl again, this time clockwise, before it abruptly stopped. Tim's eyes trailed over the globe until they latched upon a bright golden orb of light, seemingly against thin air. The sand latched to the orb of light and Tim took a step away, admiring the globe before he turned to peer out the clockface to catch a glimpse of the shimmering moon and the stars above; now Tsar could put his plan into action, slowly but surely.

****Alright, so now with time frozen, the story will mainly focus around Hiccup and Jack until Jack's needed elsewhere (or time unfreezes).****

****I'm sorry about my belated updating but hey I got a haircut that has no relation to this whatsoever but it looks like MK off of Epic yeah and we have the same initials.****

****There's actually a story behind the **_**Beware the black nightmares **_**thing. My friend, Claire, her sister, Hope, watched rotg for the first time and afterwards she would get horrible nightmares. After one of her naps, she walked up and told Claire to "beware the black nightmares," and it gave me an idea after we had a panic attack over it~****

****Hiccup also lost The Book of Dragons and that's why Jack has it now****

****Yes, so I hope you all liked this chapter (sorry about no Punzie or Merida in this one) but when Jack switches to different times, it'll have parts of everyone's reactions yeah****

****but 27 reviews, 19 follows, 13 favourites szjdhalfkjfha I love you guys****

****I've also given Astrid more of a soft side for Jack (you know after she slugs the crud out of him) because in a way, I think the two would be friends. Although I've only seen her the movie and the shorts (I haven't seen any Riders of Berk episodes but I might go buy part 1 sometime soon) I think they'd become friends after she gets over the fact that he's Jack Frost.****

****Also Hell starts early for me so I have orientation the 6th and it actually starts the 12th. ~how about no~****

****so tell me what you think so I can adore you and we can squeal and**

stuff**

6. Chapter 6

Jack stared down at the sandy letters, his breath puffing out heavily in clouds of white. The rest of the Vikings rushed forward, unaware of the danger Jack had just faced or what it had meant.

"Jack! Are you alright?" Hiccup asked. The twins cheered and patted him on the back and Fishlegs quivered on shaking legs. Astrid looked at Jack as if he were something foreign she couldn't understand; much like the look she gave the sprawled black sand.

"What's this?" She asked, crouching down. She went to touch it but Jack said, "I wouldn't. Just to be safe." She glanced up in confusion before the rest of the Vikings followed suit, inspecting the sand.

"It almost looks like ... words," Hiccup mumbled.

"All I see is sand," Tuffnut muttered.

"No, like ... another language," Hiccup sighed, staring at the letters before glancing up to Jack. "Jack, are you okay?"

The Vikings all turned to stare at Jack. He was as pale as his hair and his wide eyes made him look younger than he was. He seemed to be shaking and he feverishly dusted some of the black sand from his hand. "Y-yeah, fine," He stuttered, before glancing at the sprawl of sand.

Snotlout sided beside Jack and glanced at him. "What was that thing? I've trained Nightmares ... and that wasn't ... It wasn't right." He shook his head, causing his hair to sway under his helmet. "It was ... getting devoured."

Jack pursed his lips. He wanted to tell everyone what it really was - a warning from Pitch - but how would he explain that? They wouldn't believe him. Did the Norse even have a Boogeyman?

Fishlegs, who was lying on the ground level with the sand began, "It looks like ... ash, maybe?"

"It's not ash, it's sand," Jack said.

They all turned and looked at him. Astrid raised an eyebrow. "How do you know?"

Jack shrugged and walked forward, noticing thin shards of glass. He picked some up and threw it up before letting it fall back in his hand. "Sand and heat make glass," Jack shrugged.

Hiccup took a shard from Jack's hand and Jack warned him quickly, "Careful. It's sharp." Hiccup nodded and held the shard to the sky, watching it glint off the sun's rays of gold. He furrowed his eyebrows and squinted, looking through the tinted glass; he could almost see ... shapes in the glass. Dark tendrils of twisted coils of sand melted in time and sharp as a dagger, Hiccup didn't know what the shapes were but they were defiantly cryptid. He didn't like them at

all.

By now, all of the Vikings had a shard of glass in their hand. Jack stood off to the side, watching them all peer into the glass; he wanted to rip his hair out, bite his nails to nubs, run around in circles and scream. The entire scene before them screamed danger; did Vikings not understand that?

Tuffnut and Ruffnut were arguing over who would have the last shard; they continued to bicker and rip the shard from one another's hands before it turned into a full-fledged fight full of biting and spitting and snarling. Fishlegs was staring at the foreign object with the utmost awe on his face and Jack winced when he realized glass wasn't exactly wellknown to Vikings as they stuck more to lumber, fishing and battling dragons (or training them, as of now). Snotlout stared at his glass shard in slight aggravation. Astrid and Hiccup were mumbling to each other about their own shards, trying to peice the puzzle together.

Astrid glanced at Jack who danced anxiously on his feet. "You know," She began, "I think it'd a bit odd that he knows what this is," She gave a jerk with her chin to the glittering glass shard in her hand. Hiccup shrugged and glanced up to notice Jack's expression of fleeting panic as he glanced at the twins and at Snotlout who was about to bite into the shard.

Hiccup glanced around quickly, spotting Toothless who sniffed the sand. The sand seemed to rile up near the dragon and Jack followed Hiccup's gaze before running toward the dragon who huffed air at the sand, causing it to lash back into place of letters before ... This couldn't be happening.

The sand surged together in a wave, about to crash over Toothless but Jack shoved himself and the dragon away and started shouting for the rest of the Vikings to get out of the arena.

And then the screaming began.

...

The screaming was similar to banshee shrieks and the cracking of glass; the screech of nails clawing down a chalkboard and a deathly chorus of howls. Jack clamped his hands over his ears, shouting over the noise to the Vikings. Alas, they couldn't hear him nor could he even think what he would say if his voice was audible. Toothless flinched beside Jack as the sand flared and spiraled into a black pointed spire, shrieking with shadows forced into the unusual shape. They stuck out clawed hands that grasped air, fanged mouths that gnashed menacingly, throats that choked on cries and shrieks and roars.

All grew quiet as the spire was inspected by roaming eyes. Jack's breathing grew heavy and quick and the wind quickly flushed near him, ruffling his hair, trying to reassure him. Jack's eyes rose from the bottom of the spire to the top, inspecting the sharp spike jutting into the air. Jack could almost hear Pitch's British drawl, "_You should do it now before it gets any worse, you know."_

Jack hadn't known that he'd stepped closer to the spire; he couldn't feel the wind pushing him back or hear Toothless's warning croaks or

Hiccup's yelling over the rest of the Vikings. All Jack could hear was Pitch's voice.

"From here on out, it'll only become worse for you, Jack. You might make friends, lovers, maybe even be accepted into a makeshift family but think for a moment; in a few years, will any of this be worth it? Will you be able to live with the fact that all of these people you'll meet may forget you and all of your contact? Are you ready for that, Jack? The hurt, the heartbreak, the disbelief?"

Hiccup had actually pushed out Astrid's grip on him and raced after Jack, who was walking dangerously close to the spire, which had begun to lash out in anticipation. Whips of coiled shadows flared from the spire and Jack was only a step away from them connecting with his body. Hiccup caught up with him and shouted in his ear.

"JACK!"

"When they're all gone, Jack, you'll only have me."

Jack's mind flickered and suddenly Jack was aware of a red handprint blazing in his cheek and Hiccup screaming his name in his ear. For a moment, Jack wondered how much time had passed and how amazing his name sounded on Hiccup's tongue, that was, until he was met with the stinging pain of not another slap ... but a strike of Nightmaresand.

Jack was thrown backwards, his back skidding over the dirt. He cried out and Hiccup rushed forward. "Oh gods ... Jack?" Hiccup began, glancing fearfully to the Vikings who rushed forward.

"Someone get The Elder!" Astrid screamed shrilly, dropping to her knees beside Hiccup, who was cradling Jack's head in his hands. The twins tripped over each other before running out of the arena; Fishlegs and Snot huddled close, both slack-jawed with frightened shock.

Jack's eyelids grew heavy and as the four Vikings struggled to lift Jack onto Toothless's raised reluctant back and hurry him to The Elder's hut, he blacked out, which seemed to make the gash on his cheek pulse with spiderwebbed shadow.

"Your move, pawn."

...

Old Man Winter huffed, huddling close to his bin of frozen flames and the crowd of his frozen homeless friends. He wouldn't consider them friends; they were really only bin-hoggers which Hibernus had to partly blame on himself, as the air was always nipplier when he was near.

Hibernus sighed and glanced through the snow-speckled sky to the illuminated clockface along the greying horizon. He sighed and turned back to the bin of frozen tongues of orange and red when a shadow loomed over his dirty shoulder.

"Hibernus," Pitch drawled slowly, "I had a feeling I'd find you here."

Hibernus stiffened and whispered, "_Humbug._"

"Oh, don't pull your Norse on me, _Fornjǫt_," Pitch chuckled. "I'm very fluent actually. I _did_ have quite a riot during that Age ..."

Hibernus turned to face Pitch, who smirked at Hibernus's scruffy appearance. "Well, I see retirement hasn't exactly been kind to you," Pitch chuckled.

Hibernus rolled his eyes and turned back to the fire. "What do you want, Pitchiner?"

Pitch narrowed his eyes at the old name. "That's _General_ _Pitchiner_, to you, Winter," He smiled cruelly and clapped a hand on Hibernus' shoulder. "And, boy, do I have a job for you ..."

"If it's like the last job," Hibernus growled, "It's a no from me."

Pitch grinned. "You sound like Simon Cowell; same accent, same cold heart!"

Hibernus turned to stare Pitch in the face. "I'm here because of _you_."

"No," Pitch said, shaking his head, "We're here because of _him_."

Pitch and Winter looked up at the Moon, their eyes locking on the bright sphere in the sky, which seemed to frown down at the two men.

Winter sighed. "I'm going to regret this ... The plan?"

Pitch smirked. "Oh, leave that to me. All you have to do is play innocent and do I have the perfect hostage to help you," Pitch smirked and snapped his fingers, causing a pair of Fearlings to slink from the shadows and throw the shadow of a young boy to its knees, shadow shackles and cuffs clinking against asphalt.

Hibernus stared down at the shadow and felt himself smirk. "Oh, _boy_."

****This is probably the shortest chapter I've written for this but I wanted to give you guys a chapter...****

****Alright, Peter Pan's a Guardian, kids! He's the Guardian of Youth and Innocence (and I really don't like Hibernus' creepy vibes ew man)****

****I went to orientation yesterday and I'm terrified of high school already I seriously had a nervous breakdown I started crying I hate school and people****

****I'm sorry about the delay in updating, replies, thank you's but I'm trying to keep up and answer everyone I can! With school on Monday, I don't know how jacked up (heh) my schedule will be so I apologize in advance!****

****33 REVIEWS, 23 FOLLOWS AND 15 FAVOURITES AND THIS IS ONLY CHAPTER**

SIX I CAN'T THANK ANY OF YOU ENOUGH!**

**I also started a new book because I finished Lord of the Flies for school (which I'm probably the only person who enjoyed it, especially when I found out that Jalph was a ship) but I started The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell and it's amazing! **

I'm going to be that weird girl who reads fairytales in high school because I hate reality you guys help

**I hope you guys liked it! **

7. Chapter 7

The Elder was almost never needed in Berk, which didn't bother her in the slightest. The only time she was desperately needed was when a boy needed the permission to become a man (the slaying of a dragon had been the official way of doing so, but now they only had to stomach a bit of rotten shark or train a dragon; unsurprisingly, they usually chose the dragon instead).

She was also called upon in times of direst need and she'd had a tense feeling that she would be needed very soon. She was bottling dried herbs when the twins broke open her door; the door flew unceremoniously into the hearth at the middle of the little hut and the twins toppled over one another to get to The Elder. She raised a grey eyebrow and pinched her lips together as the twins stumbled over their words.

"Jack-

"Th-this _black sand_-"

The Elder's eyes widened and she nodded hurriedly, grabbing a few bottles of herbs and leaves and pushing a wooden mortar and pestle to the center of her work table. There was a flap of wings outside the hole in her hut and a group of young Vikings rushed in, carrying a young man with them. They placed him on a roughly sewn quilt and all shot into panicky explanations as to how he'd gotten injured.

The Elder only heard the same repeated snippets about black sand, black Nightmares and a white-haired boy named Jack. Of course, The Elder recognized the boy at first sight; she'd seen him etched along the constellations, although he was amiss a hooked crook and seemed to be dressed more modern (which Jack would have scoffed at, had he been conscious).

The first thing she noted besides his frosted hair was the gash across his pale cheek. Shadow curled away from the rip of skin like smoke in a hearth; even with The Elder's experience, she didn't have a clue what it was nor did she want to. She crushed several herbs and leaves by digging the meat of her palm against the pestle in a quick repetitive fashion until the leaves were nothing more than ground-up mush.

She walked to the young man and scraped some of the green mush from the wooden bowl to his cheek, covering the wound. After a minutes' observation, she turned to the others and said in a croakyvoice, "_LÇ«gr_."

Astrid rushed to a bucket The Elder had placed out earlier that morning. It was full of water, as it was only early afternoon. Astrid handed it off to The Elder. The rest of the Vikings watched earnestly as The Elder did the unexpected.

She dumped the bucket upside down and the water hit Jack full in the face.

Jack awoke, sputtering. His eyes flew open and he felt a jab of pain in his cheek. He glanced around the room, noting Hiccup's cheeks flush in relief. He turned to face a short elderly woman who smiled slightly when she faced Jack; her eyes lit with recognition as she whispered, "_Jokul._"

The only one to hear the wonder in the word other than Jack was Astrid. Her crystalline eyes widened as she took in Jack's appearance. Was it possible? Astrid's eyes trailed down to the quilt, which she'd expected to be wet; instead, it sparkled with the curl of newborn ferns and glistened with a sheen of ice. Astrid sucked in a breath of cool air and fluttered her eyelashes, remembering times of childhood where a young boy would fling snowballs to Astrid and strike jovial laughter she'd forgotten she had the ability to hear, let alone utter.

Jack lifted a hand, allowing his fingers to graze the cooling paste against his pained cheek. He pulled his fingertips away and winced slightly before continuing his observation of The Elder's hut. She was beaming at him and Astrid seemed to be giving him the same awestruck look. Jack didn't know what to do with all of the new attention; he'd never had this many believers back in Burgess nor the rest of the modern world. It was nice to be acknowledged.

Hiccup had to refrain from crushing Jack in a hug and apologizing for letting him get hurt. Somehow, Hiccup had to have majorly angered the gods for them to harm Jack the way they had; they were punishing Jack for something Hiccup must have done ... But, _what _had he done, exactly?

Jack cleared his throat, sheepishly smiling as he stood from the bed.

Astrid noted the blossoming of water once Jack had left the quilt; it was soaked, probably through the straw-mattress. Jack smiled to The Elder; her eyes brightened even more, if that was possible. Jack glanced over to Hiccup before Jack thanked The Elder who nodded appreciatively.

Jack turned awkwardly to the rest of the Vikings; his eyes meeting Hiccup's. Hiccup nodded and thanked The Elder and the group (amiss the twins, as they were finally getting an earful of her door's demise) filed out of the door to find Toothless nervously dancing on his feet. Toothless perked slightly at seeing Jack up but stiffened nonetheless at his close proximity with Hiccup.

"Can any of you maybe fill me in?" Jack asked, moistening his thumb with his tongue as he wiped the green paste from his cheek.

Fishlegs and Snot began to retell Jack's entire fight against the Nightmare and his weird actions with the spire but Jack heard none of

it. He was much too focused on Hiccup's lips and flushed cheeks as Hiccup said softly, "You were amazing."

...

Peter pulled himself up out of his hideout, dusting his palms of dirt. He took wide strides until his leather shoes padded against rough rock. He was overlooking the island, gazing at the hints of fire along of the horizon, his hands grappling to his hips. Peter watched the sky for a moment before swiftly glancing behind him; Peter was met with a patch of light in place of his shadow. He glowered through his shaggy fringe of redbrown, crossing his arms huffing at the pleasant sight before him.

Tinkerbell peeked from behind a leaf as Peter uncrossed his arms and kicked a plant in frustration. "I don't get it, Tink!" Peter cried indignantly. "I sewed my shadow on myself! My shadow was connected yesterday!"

Tinkerbell let out a tinkling sigh as she shook her head; Peter's shadow had been gone months. His sense of time had grown weary and his faulty memory didn't help matters; not that Tink could pinpoint how long it'd been since the last time they'd gone in search of Peter's troublesome shadow. She mumbled under her breath, which sounded like bells muffled by cloth.

Peter knelt near Tinkerbell until they were eye level. "Sorry, Tink," Peter arched an eyebrow. "What was that?"

She rolled her eyes and crossed her inch-long arms before retorting, "_Ass._"

Peter grinned and nabbed Tink in a fist, thankful for her sarcastic response. She shrieked like tin wind chimes, Peter's curled fingers around her waist. He grinned and placed her on his shoulder; she took a seat but turned her back from him to which he chuckled. "Wanna go for a swim, Tink?"

Tinkerbell's eyes widened as Peter leapt from the cliff side; she almost flew from his shoulder but Peter's hat blocked her initial path. She quickly sprinkled the two in golden dust before they could connect with the unforgiving surface of the lagoon; the mermaids were already reaching for Peter's pointed shoes and calling for him.

Peter smiled and took a seat on his rock before his brow furrowed; the mermaids watched him earnestly. "What's on your mind, Peter?" One of them asked, her hand going up to pet his cheek. He swiftly jerked up before their skin could connect and she slipped back to the water, pouting. Tink smirked at the mermaid from inside Peter's hat which he shoved back on his head, unaware of the bright glow pulsing in panic at the tip of his green feathered cap.

"I don't know," Peter said, biting his lip as he tried to remember. The mermaids' eyes latched onto the subtle movement of his teeth tugging at a flake of dehydrated skin. "Tink, what was I supposed to remember?"

Tink gave an indignant squeal from inside his cap and Peter hurriedly ripped it away from his hair. He smiled sheepishly as he plucked her

from the wooly confines; she frantically kicked at the air before Peter's face, his fingers pinching her wings uncomfortably. "_Your damn shadow!_" She cried; the mermaids rolled their eyes at the lack of attention to themselves and her squeaky language that only Peter could understand (talk about annoying).

Peter nodded brightly, dropping Tink immediately. "Oh, yes!" Peter cried enthusiastically, causing the mermaids to jerk to attention. "It seems I've lost my shadow. It also seems that I've lost it before." Tink plopped into the lagoon with a _plop!_

"Oh, Peter," A mermaid called. "_Please _do not bring another _girl_ to Neverland."

The mermaids all chorused in agreement; Peter glanced at them all questionably, innocence and curiosity painting his eyes a remarkable shade of caramel. "Another?"

Tink clutched a strand of long blonde hair, shooting Peter a glare which he obviously didn't catch. "Oh, you know, Peter, you must," another mermaid giggled nervously; none of the mermaids wanted to mention the girl, for fear Peter would remember.

Tinkerbelle was reluctant to utter the name and was surprised at the tinkling as it left her lips. She was the only one on the island who wanted to see Peter happy, at least, that was Tink's excuse to why she said, "_Wendy. Peter, her name was Wendy._"

"A Wendy? Isn't that a bird?" Peter asked, slipping into a cross-legged fashion, expecting a story of birds.

The mermaids stared at him in open-mouthed shock before all sharing a sly smile. "Oh, yes, Peter, you're thinking of a Wendybird," One mermaid called.

"Very nasty birds," Another quipped.

"You had better kill them on sight, Peter, you're a good shot, aren't you?"

Peter grinned, leaping to his feet. He positioned his arms as if he were armed with a slingshot; he began to retell a story of him fighting off a pack of savages with only a stack of pebbles and his trusty slingshot (which he'd only imagined owning); the mermaids gave dramatic "Oh, Peter!"'s and listened intently to his story.

Tink clutched two fistfuls of gold loosely, oblivious to Peter's outrageous retelling of a relatively friendly game of skipping rocks with a few young redskins; she was too focused on Peter's lack of knowledge of Wendy, the girl he'd been so intent on being the Boys' mother ... the girl he'd sworn he'd never forget.

...

Peter's shadow struggled against its nightmarish confines; it stuck its hands out of the slits of the dark birdcage, thin fingers reaching for things it couldn't see nor feel.

"What are we supposed to do with ... _it_?" Gothel asked, her nose turned away from the young shadow locked in the cage that had once

been occupied with colourful tittering freaks.

"Ever heard of the saying 'Don't wake a sleeping giant?'" Pitch asked, peering into the cage; a hand swiped forward, barely a centimeter off from connecting with Pitch's nose.

"Depends on what giant we're speaking of," Hibernus shrugged.

Pitch rolled his eyes as Hibernus hurriedly continued, "Well, it does, I mean, they get really grumpy-"

"Hibernus," Pitch snapped; Hibernus slumped his shoulders in defeat. Pitch sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose (or tried to, at least). "You know what, the moment's gone."

Gothel rolled her eyes; the Nightmares shrieked in anticipation. The shadow in the cage anxiously glanced back at the ocean of fear. Hibernus tried to convince Pitch to explain his clever saying; Pitch sighed, ignoring Hibernus and decided to allow his Fearlings to begin the breakage of the young boy's shadow. "I only want it to send him a signal," Pitch began as the shadows lunged forward, slipping through the cage slits.

"A shadow being missing for months on end wasn't signal enough?" Gothel growled.

Pitch shook his head, smirking. "Oh no. It needs to be something drastic. Drastic enough to send them all a message."

****You guys are all so fantastic I love you all so much****

****41 reviews, 25 followers, 17 favourites just wow****

****School starts Monday and I'm still in denial~****

****I loved writing Peter's part; Peter and Tink are a mix of the movie and book selves, by the way, as not to confuse you. Peter also can speak with Tinkerbell (I blame the heavy doses of pixie dust he's most likely consumed over the years; hey guys that sounds like a drug)****

****"hey whatcha got"****

****"seven grams of dust"****

****"what sort of dust man"****

******_**pixie dust**_******

****"are you shitting me"****

****"no man you're supposed to supply the faith and the trust and i supply the dust didn't you go to high school -scoffs-dumbass"****

****~tugs on shades- love you guys****

Jack was pretty sure that staying with Hiccup for almost a week was considered 'overstaying your welcome'. He was also pretty sure that Vikings weren't used to the saying and it wasn't like Jack could try to explain it without making him look as if he didn't want to stay with Hiccup, because he defiantly did. Hiccup and Toothless were amazing company; Toothless was even beginning to warm up on him (Jack had a few singe marks to prove it).

The only person Jack wasn't getting used to was Hiccup's father, Stoik, and likewise. He was fine with Jack and Hiccup being friends; he was just very interested in Jack. Very interested.

The first time Jack had met Stoik was after one of Stoik's vast journeys; needless to say, he was tired, smelly and not at all ready to find an odd haired boy snuggled up in Hiccup's blankets while Hiccup was upstairs sketching.

It took a long time to explain everything to Stoik and the same amount of time to try to pull the ax from Hiccup's headboard.

Days ago, Stoik had actually been well-rested enough to sit down with Hiccup and Jack to a Nordic dinner; Jack, thankfully, couldn't taste any of it.

Stoik started up the conversation, a bowl of charred fish and undercooked potatoes in front of him. He stabbed a potato with a dagger he'd been clutching in his huge fist; the noise startled Jack and caused him to jump. Hiccup glanced between his father and Jack, quietly gnawing on a strip of fish. Toothless smuggled two fish from the spit above the hearth and dragged them into a corner to eat.

"So, Jack," Stoik began. "I hear you resided in Jotunheim before coming to Berk."

Jack nodded, poking at his food with a smaller knife similar to Stoik's.

"Well," Stoik continued, "How do you like it?"

Jack glanced up, meeting Stoik's gaze. His face was slightly guarded (mainly by a mass of unruly beard) and his eyes gazed back expectantly at Jack, awaiting an answer. "Berk's really nice. It's a little warm for my taste, however; I prefer the cold."

Hiccup scoffed slightly and Jack glanced at him, smiling. Stoik was silent for maybe two seconds before he let out a loud laugh. "Ah! You'd love our winters then, Jack! They last most of the year."

Jack smiled at Stoik. "I'll have to try and stay that long then."

Hiccup frowned slightly as Stoik asked, "You're leaving?"

"Not for a while," Jack shrugged and took another bite of fish. He was going to leave it at that but Stoik began to press.

"Well, where are you leaving to?"

Jack thought for a moment. "I'm going on an ... expedition."

—
Stoik raised his furry eyebrows. "Oh?"

"Yeah," Jack continued, sawing his knife into a baby potato. "I'm looking for," Jack thought back to the book tucked away in his silver stachel, "... will-o'-the-wisps."

Stoik grinned through his mustashe and laughed heartily.
"_Furoolles?"

Jack slowly nodded, totally clueless as to what was happening. Stoik nodded eagerly and said, "I was just there! 'Round the bend of Berk, there it is!"

Jack's eyebrows furrowed for a half-second; Hiccup noticed the slight dip in Jack's usually high eyebrows. Jack smiled and asked, "Where exactly is that? I need to make sure I'm going in the right direction."

"Well, that depends on whether you're going by ship or dragon—"

Stoik was interrupted by the door being ripped open; a man tottered in with a huge wire cage of extra fish in his thick arms. He had thick braids in his mustashe that slapped against his knees and a unibrow to match. A stone tooth gutted from his bottom lip and he had a prosthetic arm from the elbow down and a wooden pegleg that seemed to be constructed of driftwood. If any of these seemed to slow him down, Jack couldn't tell; he zoomed right into the hut and slapped several of the fish onto the spit. "Aye," He nodded to Stoik and Hiccup, glancing twice at Jack. "Who's the white-haired fellow?"

"This 'ere is Jack," Stoik shouted over the roaring of the hearth and the sizzling of the fish. "Jack ...," Stoik glanced back at Jack and asked, "What was yer surname again?"

Jack had to stop himself before he said 'Frost'. Jack thought back, his mind briefly flashing to a time when he was young and alive, his sister by his side and laughing all the way; and then his mother shouting after them, "Jackson Overland! Slow down!"

Jack smiled faintly. "Overland. Jack Overland."

Stoik raised an eyebrow and nodded, waving a thickset arm to the man tending to the crackling fish over the hearth. "You 'ear that, Gobber? Overland!"

The man known by the name Gobber turned and pointed his prosthetic arm at Jack; Jack noticed it looked like a set of makeshift tongs poking from a curve of metal, the tips of the tongs red-hot. "Overland, eh? That sounds familiar ... Where did you say yer're from?"

"Jotunheim," Jack said, a little louder for Gobber to hear. Gobber came closer so that he stood between Hiccup and Stoik and gazed at Jack from across the table. "That sounds very familiar." Gobber stopped to stroke his uneven braids of blonde.

Jack sniffed slightly, detecting a hint of something burning. As the spirit of winter, Jack had always been sensitive to heat and the prospect of fire. Jack glanced over to the unattended fish over the spit, which had begun to crisp.

Hiccup turned and sighed, "Gobber ... The fish-"

"Oi!" Gobber yelled, turning around and rushing to the overcooking fish. Alas, Toothless beat him to it, sinking his suddenly there teeth into both blistering fish before darting off back to his corner where he continued to growl at Gobber until he gave up on trying to save the remains of the fish. Gobber came back to the table, shoulders hunched.

Toothless rolled his wide green eyes before upchucking a part of the fish. He then grabbed the fish gingerly between his jaws and waddled over to Gobber; Toothless dropped the glistening fish onto the wooden table before Gobber and waited expectantly. Gobber smiled and patted Toothless with his free hand, his tongs already finding purchase into the fish as he placed a part of it in his mouth.

Jack felt like he was going to be sick; there was no way that could be healthy.

Stoik shrugged and continued on as if Gobber hadn't just taken a bite of a rejuvitated bit of fish. "So, Jack was telling me he's going on an expedition after _furolles_."

Gobber was in mid-bite, his stone tooth slipping from his gums. He pulled it out, much to Jack's suppressed disgust, and placed the tooth on the table. Hiccup edged a little ways from it as Gobber stared imploringly at Jack. "Now, why would you want to do that?!"

Jack was silent for a while until Hiccup spoke up, "Well ... He's looking for his Fate. Isn't that what they do?"

Gobber nodded. "They lead you to yer Fate, but ... That's not something you should look fer. It'll catch up with you anyways."

Jack closed his eyes tightly, his thoughts drifting. _No, it won't. Because it already has._

Jack reopened his eyes when Gobber continued, "Why, Thor almighty, if I had known I would lose both my hand and foot, I would've done a bit more! I would've picked more fights to punch with my good hand before I lost it; if I had it, still, boy, Stoik, would you be in fer it ..."

Stoik let out a hearty laugh that actually shook the table which was over his large stomach. "Oi! You can still hit and bite like ye used to! Don't tell me you don't put that stone tooth to good use!" The two began to quarell; Hiccup glanced at Jack's slightly strained facial expression with concern before stepping up from the table.

"Hey ... Jack, wanna go for a walk?" Hiccup asked; he watched Jack's distress fade and his blue eyes ignite but there was something Hiccup also noticed, the sadness lining his lips and tucked away deep in the crevices of smile lines and dimples. Jack hopped up from his seat as

Hiccup grabbed his fur vest and slipped it over his shoulders. Toothless followed the two boys out after Jack had grudgingly shoved his cool feet into a pair of hide boots.

Hiccup and Jack walked down a small pathway, side-by-side, their breaths mingling in the cold evening. The sky was dark, signaling that the day was drawing to a close. The low sunset streaked the rough ocean in the last touches of warmth, like slices of auburn and gold waving farewell over dark blue flashes of water. Hiccup was the first to break the silence. "Jack ..."

Jack turned, glancing at Hiccup; he'd evidently slowed to keep in stride with the boy who was still fumbling on his metal leg over the bumpy ground. Toothless had darted before the two and was currently snuffing out a few wild birds from the trees and watching them slice through the air curiously. "Hmm?"

"You're ... different," Hiccup struggled for a word to completely outline the boy's personality. "You're not like the rest of them here."

Jack smiled slightly. Hiccup didn't continue so Jack asked, "What do you mean?"

Hiccup bit his lip, rubbing his thumb over the fur of his vest. "You ... You're just ... I don't know," Hiccup huffed out a puff of air and sighed, sucking in a new one. "You're not like anyone here or anyone from Jotunheim. You're ...," Hiccup shook his head and hunched his shoulders, quickening his pace.

Jack furrowed his eyebrows and swiftly ripped the boots away, nimbly hopping behind Hiccup. "I'm what?" Jack asked, his cool breath tickling the newly-erect hairs on the back of Hiccup's neck.

"You're just so ... so ...," Hiccup couldn't think of any of word to say except the one on his mind, "_different_". No one else is like you, but ... I feel like I've met you before."

Jack furrowed his brow even more. "_I'd remember meeting you, Hiccup._"

Jack suddenly felt a pinch of fear, the words of his mind's tongue echoing in his ears. "_Or, would I? I forgot my sister, my mother ... I forgot myself._"

"Jack," Hiccup had turned to the unusually silent boy. In the setting sun, Hiccup had a realization; with the subtle hints of gold and auburn against Jack's frame, Jack didn't look like a boy. He looked like a man. Something Hiccup could never do.

Jack shifted, his nose and lips and eyelashes flashing in the last few splashes of orange before the _SÃ³l_ was completely gone. Hiccup wished for it to be day again; he wanted to see Jack, to know he was there. In the dark, Hiccup felt completely alone, just as he had when the ocean had clung to him so heavily until he'd almost been lost. Almost.

"Yes, Hiccup?" Jack asked, straining his neck in earnest, awaiting Hiccup's words.

The words were trapped in Hiccup's mind, however, words that felt foreign on anyone's tongue; words Hiccup would never have the courage to ever say, so instead, he settled for, " ... Where's Toothless?"

Jack sighed, brushing off the abrupt change of subject as the two began their frantic search for the sleek shadow of a dragon. They followed trampled weeds and overturned trees until they found a shadow with unusually curious green eyes that peered at the two in a question, when the two should've been questioning the dragon.

The dragon was up in a tree, its scaly legs perched like that of a bird's; its wings pinched against its sides in a way to tuck them close to his body. The dragon was sitting on the remaining twigs of a broken nest. Hiccup groaned and Jack laughed, the two running forward.

"Toothless! No!" Hiccup scolded, his hands grabbing bits of his own hair as he tugged.

Jack walked around Hiccup and started to climb up the knotted trunk of the tree to try and convince the dragon down. The dragon only growled at Jack and continued to scoot away from him. Jack sighed and gave up, hopping down from the branch, his feet landing inches from two softball sized speckled eggs. "Hey, Hic," Jack called, his voice soft as he dipped down and scooped the two eggs in his cool hands, "Look at this."

Hiccup tripped over some brambles and weeds, finally reaching Jack and the two eggs, one in each palm. Hiccup stared at them, before Jack handed him one, which Hiccup had to manhandle with both hands, as the width of the egg was much larger than he expected and the weight was heavy and the shell slick and smooth to the touch. Hiccup stared at it with wide curious eyes, much like the dragon's.

The dragon slipped down and neared Hiccup; his snout flexed as he gave the egg a sniff. Hiccup placed his hand against Toothless's snout and gave it a slight push before Hiccup's palms wrapped protectively again around the cooling egg. "It's cold," Hiccup said.

Jack could feel his; it was warm. His lips parted as his thoughts continued to wander. _Isn't that sad, Jack. You're even colder than this dying egg. _His old wound against his cheek throbbed.

Jack thought for a moment, feeling its weight. Were bird eggs normally this heavy? Then, it clicked and at the right moment, too, as Toothless had sniffed the egg in Hiccup's hand and detected the faint hint of another dragon. Fire bubbled up in the dragon's throat, instinct taking over as his irises slitted.

"They're drag-" Jack tried to say but his voice was drowned out by the roar of flames grabbing hold of oxegyn with wispy orange tongues.

I'm sorry this is short but I wanted to give you all a chapter~

**I've also read Land of Stories and A Tale Dark and Grimm (fantastic, both of them) and I've started The Merry Adventures of

Robin Hood (woo me) and I've also seen Jack the Giant Slayer (I'll have to buy it and join thy fandom because I have the frothing of story ideas) and then Once Upon A Time is going to Neverland and you guys don't understand my feels right now you're all just like my parents and it's Percy Jackson's birthday just leave me to die and this probably isn't even a decent chapter because I hurriedly typed it and didn't even add anymore perspectives**

but I love you all for sticking with my tardiness which means I should explain that I may only be able to write and post on weekends now that school's shoving homework down my throat

I also misspelled a lot I'm sorry I'll fix it sometime -flops and cries-

9. Chapter 9

Fire. That was all Hiccup could see through his sweaty bangs; blue and purple sonic blasts of flame that ended in orange wisps. He couldn't see Toothless through the smokey haze nor could he pinpoint where Jack had been last or where he was now. The only thing he was aware of other than the suffocating fire was the warming egg in his sweat slickened palms.

Jack clutched his own egg to his chest, ducking away from the flames. His eyes were wide with newfound fear and his breathing grew panicked and labored. "HICCUP!" Jack yelled, choking as he swallowed smoke; the smoke burned his lungs and his heart began to pump furiously at the burning sensation he felt within himself. It wasn't a figurative sense, either; his body was literally burning, melting, at the unforgiving touch of fire and flame and destruction.

Hiccup felt a flush of wind to his left and cried out as sparks caught on his fur vest, igniting in orange flashes; a branch had broken from the tree near Hiccup and was currently cinders and ash near his feet. Hiccup winced at the sudden pain in his fake leg, the metal gnawing painfully at the healed-over tissue from his last episode of complications with it. A cinder had caught in the complicated metal and was currently burning the metal red-hot, only making Hiccup's predicament worse. Hiccup could hear a faint panicked yell that he could've sworn was his name in the smokey haze; alas, his mind was clouded as was his vision and he couldn't have been sure.

Jack called Hiccup's name a few more times, only worsening his state; Jack swiped his shaking hands over his forehead and stared at the sparkling liquid over his fingers. Jack stared at his fingers in disbelief; he was melting. There was a sudden tiny crackle and Jack first looked to the sky, expecting a branch to come down and impale him; when his eyes found nothing, he then looked down to the speckled egg against his drenched cotton shirt and watched as a spiderweb crack broke away and a tiny black claw poked through the hole. There was a little muffled cry from inside the egg and Jack wrapped his shaking fingers around the egg's fragile shell, wetting his cracked lips in a nervous manner. He wasn't going to let the little guy die.

Toothless trampled over sparks, roaring, trying to hear over the crackle of the fire, his eyes searching for any sign of Hiccup and,

reluctantly but nevertheless, Jack. His catlike eyes swept across the area, landing on a shadow in the flames; Toothless leapt for it, following the boyish form through the fire, narrowly dodging falling branches and orange leaves. He roared after it, trying to squint through the purpling haze.

Hiccup couldn't possibly wrench the metal fixture away; he was both smart enough to know he wouldn't be able to walk, let alone run, away and that his hands would become raw with burns before he managed to yank it off. Hiccup took a shaky breath through his nose, trying not to breathe in too much smoke. There was a new cracking sound; Hiccup immediately looked to the air, panicked, only to look down at the egg. He gasped as the shell began to crack and slip away; gnashing baby teeth struggled to nip at the shell and claws scratched at it in mild annoyance before a tiny eye peeked through the hole it'd made and peered out curiously. Hiccup stared down at the eye before the eye disappeared and the claws were back, peeling away at the shell from the inside.

Jack held the egg close to him, thinking of ways away from the flames; he felt a painful tug in his abdomen and remembered the time when Pitch had snapped his staff in half ... His staff! Jack closed his eyes and scrunched up his features, trying to concentrate. He needed his staff; he needed cold. Jack let out a frustrated sigh at the lack of water molecules in the air at this level and decided hauntily that he needed to be higher up. He needed to get out of this heat but he didn't want to just leave Hiccup in this fire. Alas, eventually, Jack realized that if he got high enough and it got cold enough, he could send loads of snow down to blanket the flames, Jack kicked off the ash and flew maybe five feet up before he was hit with another slap of heat. Jack landed on his back painfully, the egg on his chest. Jack sighed, sitting up and forcing his aching muscles to push him into a standing position. He took a shaky breath and forced himself to kick off again, the egg in one of his hands. Jack dodged heat signatures and flaming branches, noticing a cold front high above him. Jack shot forward, determination fueling him now. He reached the cool expanses of cold fronts and clouds and held his free hand out in a grasping motion, awaiting his staff. Unbeknownst to Jack, the form in the egg began to shiver.

Jack's staff, tucked under a great mass of fur blankets and leather shawls, began to shake furiously and eventually busted through the mass, leaving through the door it'd busted open. Underneath the mass of fur and leather lay a silver satchel and barely evident unless you were very observant was the edge of a leather journal, beaten and soft from far too much use.

Hiccup cradled the tiny egg in his hands, the top of the egg forgotten and discarded near his hide boot. The form in the bottom half of the egg was snuggled in the makeshift bed, feeling the everpresent warmth of his hands. Hiccup had been walking through the flame-ridden forest, trying to find Toothless or Jack through the flames and smoke. With the comforting weight in Hiccup's hands, he'd begun to relax, albeit slightly as he still jumped at the crackling of branches and the roar of heat that rubbed his cheeks and burned the remainder of his leg.

Toothless was lost; he couldn't find the boyish shadow anywhere. Supporting singe marks across his leathery wings and his scaly skin, Toothless wished he could see anything but smoke and haze and

hallucinations of his master. Toothless snorted through his nose uneasily before turning back to where he'd come and stomping through burnt logs and singing to find Toothless or Jack through the flames and smoke. With the comforting weight in Hiccup's hands, he'd begun to relax, albeit slightly as he still jumped at the crackling of branches and the roar of heat that rubbed his cheeks and the burned the remainder of his leg.

Jack caught the staff in his hand and the force nearly pushed him off balance. He flipped over, the egg and staff now each in one hand, and breathed in cool air for a change. His gut pinched and Jack closed his eyes, throwing his staff into the bottom of a cloud; the air and water molecules answered to his command and all the clouds began to produce rain, sleet, snow, hail; anything Jack could think of seeped from the clouds and swirled down below his boot-clad feet.

Toothless didn't have to go very far before he found Hiccup and the egg; Toothless roared and rushed to his master, much like the modern dog (or goat, in Gobber's case) would greet his master after a long (or short) disappearance. Hiccup let out a choked call of relief and rushed to his dragon; Toothless nuzzled him and purred before croaking hurriedly, trying to convince Hiccup to get on his back to get out of the burning wood. Hiccup only clutched the egg closer, confused, and looked to the sky; he could see something ... It was faint, a shadow, no, two shadows, one glowing with blue light and another wrapped in smoky black tendrils like tentacles of an unruly sea monster.

Hiccup heart froze in his chest as Toothless proceeded to roar into his face, panic slitting his catlike eyes. Hiccup stared up into the smoking haze of the ruined forest to the upcoming battle overhead; he watched the glowing shadow whip around, a crooked staff in his hand as the two connected. Then, from the bowels of the sky and the clouds, Thor struck down his mighty power over the elements and Hiccup had a faint realization just before a chunk of ice connected with his temple: I remember you, Jokul. I remember.

Jack stared at the black shadow in surprise. The shadow's hair fluttered in the heavy wind and stared at him with unblinking golden eyes, eyes that looked pained and rejected and most of all scared and Jack didn't think eyes like that, eyes without pupils, could show such emotion ... Emotion Jack had felt his entire invisible life.

Jack's sympathy lessened when the shadow pulled its black fist back before slamming it into Jack's jaw; black tendrils clung to his jaw, crawling up to the healed bit of cheek that had been broken before. The black spiderweb in his cheek throbbed black and the tendrils seeped into the pale flesh, turning the web darker and more distinct. Jack bit back a cry and willed his power into his staff, which he whipped forward and slammed into the shadow's head. The shadow's head whipped to the left then turned to face him, unblinking and unphased. A tendril whipped out and wrapped around Jack's wrist, pulling him close to the shadow. The shadow blinked and the eyes suddenly had fearful brown irises and he whispered into Jack's ear before he disappeared in a flash of lightning. The words rung in Jack's head like thunder and Jack closed his eyes before losing all consciousness, freefalling through the hail and the rain and the snow. The words were etched in the sky, in the destroyed land, sketched into Jack's wrist with tendrils of shadow: Beware the black

nightmares._

...

Back in Neverland, Peter ran his hand over the bark of Hook's ship, confusion melting over his elfish features. He couldn't recall how this ship had gotten there; he ran his fingers across a scarlet red coat and rubbed a discoloured button between his thumb and forefinger. He licked his lips slightly and pulled it from its hook before throwing it over his shoulders. He glanced down and noticed a pair of boots; he shoved his small childish feet into the size 9 men's boots. Peter let out a bubbly laugh at the foolish attire and gave an innocent strut. "Look, Tink!" He called to the flash of golden light. "Look at me!"

Tink sighed and watched Peter hop around Hook's quarters. Peter stopped near a flattened scroll against a wooden desk, positioned into the desk by a dagger. Peter blinked at the yellowed paper and the scrawled map of Neverland, his brow furrowing in confusion and maybe even recognition as his eyes slid to an X that marked the spot of ... Was that the Nevertree? He ran a finger over the mark and stared at it before tapping it with his fingernail. He stared at it only a moment longer before his eyes slid up and caught sight of Hook's ship in a bottle; Peter let out an excited cry and reached for it, peering through the glass. He flipped it over and shook it slightly before growing disinterested; he replaced it on the desk and picked up a slippery red rubber thing in his hands and began to knead the water inside with his small hands before tossing it over his shoulder and hopping out the door to the deck.

Tink leapt to the side as the rubber met wood beside her; water slushed over the wood and it hit the floor with a squishy _plod_. She huffed in frustration and followed Peter out.

Peter overlooked the shimmering greens and blues of the sea surrounding him. He looked out at the water and rubbed a long forgotten scar of angry teeth before he felt a shocking pain across his neck, as if someone had slapped him with a tree branch. Pain rippled across his body, shooting to and fro between major limbs; his side popped and blood seeped through his fingers then the same happened to his temple until both of his hands were pressed against the sides of his head before he fell to his knees, blood as red as the scarlet coat. "Tink!" He cried through fresh tears. "Tink! It hurts!"

Tinkerbell zipped forward in a panic; she darted around him feverishly, unable to decide what to do. Peter rolled in his agony and Tink stared down with wide fearful eyes before she remembered who could help as she looked to the darkening sky and the sphere of ivory against the navy blue. She let out a spew of reassuring tinkling before darting off, cringing at his cries for her not to leave him; his cries only pushed her to go faster until she was inside a tree root and past a curtain of leather. She groaned when she found the dusty old stick of a switch; she slammed her weight down against it, cursing her size. She finally grabbed a rock and after a bout of struggling let it fall from her strained arms before it came down swiftly and pushed down the lever, breaking a chunk of wood, as well, but it didn't really concern Tink as she was already far from the tree and burning through leaves to get back to Peter. She froze, however, when she realized she couldn't hear Peter's cries over the

rush of wind in her elfish ears or the intense pounding of her heart. She looked through the burnt outline of a leaf, staring at the sand-ravaged ship, empty except for the blood-slickened spot of deck Peter had earlier cried upon. Her heart thudded absently as rainbows flashed through the sky and the moon shimmered behind a bundle of rouge Fearlings, holding an unconscious boy by his ankles.

...

Pitch lazily shielded his eyes with a light grey hand, peering through his fingers at the sudden light overhead. The army of Fearlings hissed at the burning pain and retreated from the light as a cluster of bustling shadows soared into the dark palace before throwing the form of a young boy to the cold ground before Pitch's feet.

A shadow of the same boy reached through the bars of a cage, his other hand clutching the piercing pain in his side in which he'd been stabbed on his arrival back from Berk;_ his arrival back from failure_, Gothel had called it.

Pitch raised his eyebrows amusedly at the act of desperation from the shadow; Peter stirred on the cold ground, rolling and writhing and groaning. He winced as he pushed himself from the floor and blinked in the darkening throne room; his eyes found feet as black as the boots that had earlier slipped away into the sea.

Pitch smiled unkindly down to Peter, who backed up slightly before his eyes caught sight of his shadow. Steeling his courage, Peter glared at Pitch and jerked his chin to his shadow. "What's this?" Peter snapped.

Pitch closed his eyes and pursed his lips; the boy was already irritating.

"What kind of game are you playing here, you-you," Peter puffed out a huff of frustration, unable to find a word for this brooding figure before him.

"-Bogey?" Pitch chuckled humorlessly. He lazily peered down at the boy before him.

Peter had a faint memory in the back of his mind of a time when he was young, too young to remember fully, but still old enough to remember the fear of Bogeys, of the dark, of the villians of old London. He remembered a voice, a kind motherly voice, whispering to him that it was all but make believe, all but dreams; but Peter loved pretending, he loved dreams. Or at least Peter thought he did.

The Fearlings formed lifesized shadow puppets from above; an image of a young boy falling from a pram and staring longingly from a window and later finding that window locked and his bed filled with a new boy who was being kissed by a mother and a father, Peter's mother and father, or at least they used to be. Then a girl and two brothers; young boys in the skins of animals they'd once slain; the boys leaving and growing old; the girl, her face wrinkled with stress and an equal amount of worry and smile lines, and a baby girl she held and Peter cowering from the sight. Peter stared at the show in open-mouthed horror, tears rushing to his eyes, and he sobbed; he let

out sobs that racked his small frame and caused his shadow to cry, as well, cry with no words or tears, which was even more heartwrenching than the pained screams from the boy; the boys' cries and the shadows' silence were a chorus that Pitch was directing and he watched the scene before him with a somber expression; even Pitch Black wasn't sick enough to enjoy the torment caused to the boy by his memories.

A woman's chuckle met his ears as teeth nipped the top of Pitch's ear and the woman continued, "So, I see your plan is officially unfolding ... Took you long enough," and she shoved Pitch away as she walked to the boy, his pain so horrible that his cries were now silent; his shadow now howled at the woman as she cruelly kicked the boy in the gut but cowered when she whirled at him, snarling. She spat into the cage and glared at Pitch. Even in this scarce light, the grey strands were evident in her shadowy curls; she dug her long nails into the palms of her hands, pursing her lips together. In her sweetest tone of voice she could muster, she asked, "So, Pitch. When will we ... extract information?"

She strode forward, running a manicured nail along his jawline. His nose scrunched slightly at the excessive flirtation and he noted the venom behind the sugar-coat, poking through the last word like gaping stab wounds. Pitch swallowed audibly, causing Gothel's lips to curl. "We will when it's time." Her smile faltered into a grimace and she snarled at him, wishing to claw her nails down his normally smug face.

"And, when will that be?" She asked through clenched teeth, her nail biting into Pitch's flesh.

He sighed. "When I've got time on my side."

She suddenly grinned, her snarl morphing to a purr. "Well then; that changes everything," She bit her lip, rolling her tongue over her teeth. "Let's put this little plan into action."

****Oh god ew what am I doing this ship you guys****

****and poor Peter why do I write this stuff****

****and Hijack just****

****why****

****and you guys****

****56 reviews****

****37 followers****

****26 favourites****

****and just the 9th chapter****

****cries because you're all perfect****

Toothless had managed to drape Hiccup over his back; adjusting one of his wings higher, he could make an almost umbrella motion over Hiccup to protect him from the torrents of weather. The only problem was protecting Hiccup left Toothless with no force against the numbing cold that assaulted his body; Toothless was blind, burnt, numb, confused and scared. He struggled to trudge out of the woods and find shelter.

The wind whistled and shrieked as Jack tumbled from the great expanse of angry clouds; the wind tried to control his fall and perhaps cushion it. The wind tried to grab him, to place him gently over grass and sand; instead the wind was pushed against, fought, so that Jack was on his own. He fell into the pond Toothless was struggling to find shelter near.

Toothless jumped and roared indignantly at the sound. He watched the lake glaze over with thin sheets of ice before a pale hand burst through the glass-like surface of the pond and a boy with frosty-tipped hair pulled himself from the lake, his feet brushing against the soft auburn glow of a forgotten hourglass. Jack shoved himself from the pond, the ice crackling back together. Jack pulled a cold egg from the ice over the lake where he'd rolled it, standing on unsteady feet as he turned to the dragon. Jack limped to Toothless, rubbing his snout before tugging off the scorched metal of Hiccup's leg.

Toothless led Jack to a grassy cool cave sculpted within the footprint of a clearing that he'd first met Toothless and Hiccup in. Jack followed Toothless inside; Jack pulled Hiccup from Toothless so that Toothless could lay down. Jack placed Hiccup down gently under Toothless' wing and placed his egg beside Hiccup's. Jack tugged off his boots before snuggling into the cold damp stone, his back to Toothless.

"We'll take Hiccup back tomorrow," Jack told Toothless, wrapping his arms around himself for comfort; he shivered - not because of cold, obviously but ... in fear. He could still hear the chilling words of the shadow and his cheek was throbbing painfully now, the pain spreading until it was behind his eye.

Toothless watched Jack with his catlike eyes, blinking them every so often. Toothless would send sparks and tongues of flame to the eggs when they grew so cold they would shake in their shells; Toothless didn't know the first thing of caring for eggs but he figured he might as well let his instincts take over and try to keep them alive. The faint blushes of warmth kept Hiccup from shaking against Toothless; Jack could feel them as hot flashes searing his back but he didn't complain, only gritted his teeth and shut his eyes tightly, trying to fall asleep.

...

Guardians weren't known for dreaming; Sandman did it plenty, but that was the Sandman's job. Jack's job was to have fun and when he was sleeping, he wasn't spreading fun or joy or anything. He was just lying on the cold cave floor, struggling to find a comfortable position; a swirl of gold began to twist over his spiky hair and Jack winced, knowing what was to come.

What was to haunt him again.

It was like Jack was watching his memories from a front-row seat; his sister was there, inches from him, yet so far away. There he was, too, alive and reassuringly warm; yet here Jack was, dead and forbiddingly cold. His sister - he still couldn't recall her name - was so hopeful, so trusting that Jack would save her ... It broke his heart that she believed in him that much yet he'd never gotten to see her again.

When the ice began to crack, Jack felt a pain behind his eyes, the start of a splitting headache. He woke up, but not before he could hear his sister's cry as the lake swallowed him whole.

Jack sat up, panting on his own cool air. He was covered in a thin layer of frost - his substitute for sweat - that was already thawing from the warmer air of the cave, crackling against his cold skin. Jack pushed himself off the floor of the cave and slipped from the cave mouth; he took a seat near the pond and pulled his legs to his chest, his toes causing frost to swirl near the bank.

Jack stared into the pond and suddenly thrust his hands into the water, his hands closing around a slick stripe of black and yellow.

...

Tim threw his black hood from his head, rapping his fist against a deep red door. When Tim received no answer, he rolled his eyes and, with a flick of both wrists, the door was thrust open and Tim waltzed in.

A deep velvet red comforter was pushed lopsidedly on the heart-shaped bed. A form rolled over velvet sheets; Tim took several strides forward before he threw open the thick red drapes. Sunlight filled the heavily scented room and the forms in the bed groaned and shifted.

There was a shriek and one of the forms in the bed covered herself as Tim rolled his eyes; a figure with bedhead groaned and blinked uncertainly before a lazy smile lit his face like the blush of a candle. "Nice timing, Tim."

Tim rolled his eyes and ripped the blankets from the godly form on the bed, ignoring the girl who tightened her hold on her bundle of blankets. "Let's go, Eric. We're already late."

"That's Cupid E. Valentine to you," Eric shot back, rolling off the bed and strutting. Tim averted his eyes and rubbed the bridge of his nose, tugging out a pocket watch to check the time.

Eric snickered and grabbed his forgotten boxers off the floor, struggling to tug them over his heavenly legs. He sighed and snapped his fingers, deciding to just go full God; he could care less for mortal living, especially since he could snap his fingers and be fully clothed or fully nude in moments. It was a very beneficial skill, he had to admit; Eric tugged at his pink tie and began to tidy his white suit. "How do I look?" He asked, smirking.

Tim raised an eyebrow and began to walk to the door; Eric turned and sent a wink to the Muse in the bed. "Hey, baby, lock the door on your

way out, alright? And, please, no more Taylor Swift songs about me, they're getting a bit annoying." With that, Eric followed Tim out until they were walking in stride.

"So, where are we going?" Eric asked.

"Did you not get the signal?" Tim asked, predicting the answer as Eric said, "Nah, man, I was a little tied up with a Muse, if you know what I'm saying-"

Tim held up a hand. "I honestly don't care about how your night went, Eric."

Eric shot Tim a glare. "It's Cupid-"

"Look, point is, Peter's missing and there have been more shadow sightings than ever before," Tim snapped, picking up speed.

"Are you sure-" Eric began.

"-it wasn't just his shadow that's missing? Peter's shadow's been gone for months. There are Nightmare sightings across the globe and in several different dimensions - past, present and future," Tim pulled a set of keys from his pocket; a flying mobile was suddenly visible, its invisibility gone.

"Well, aren't you Timmy Robinson?" Eric asked, somersaulting into the seat of the car, the top capsule flipping down over him as Tim took his own seat. Eric watched Tim from his spot as Tim glanced his way. "You can do anything!"

"Just because my grandpa is Cornelius Robinson does not mean I can do everything," Tim clarified, flicking multiple switches and pushing several blinking buttons. "My dad is Wilbur; that should concern you."

"'Least you were lucky enough to miss out on that cowlick," Eric teased before Tim pulled down a lever and they shot forward into the sky, directly for the second star on the right.

...

Hiccup blinked awake, snuggled into Toothless, his leg stump warmed by a hide boot. Hiccup glanced around the cave; his heart tugged at the absence of Jack, which was ridiculous ... Wasn't it?

Hiccup picked up the base of an egg and rubbed his finger down the baby dragon's spine. The other had cracked and splintered but the baby in the egg was asleep; Hiccup watched a thin swirl of smoke lift from the dragon's nostrils. Toothless was awake, too, his wide eyes watching the baby dragon's tail wrap around Hiccup's finger.

Jack walked in just then, four slick striped bodies slapping against his back. He pulled them off and tossed them on the floor. One of the bodies slid until it was inches from Toothless and Hiccup; Hiccup's eyes widened and he shouted, "Jack! No! Toothless, he's-" just as Toothless shrieked and leapt to his feet.

Jack rushed forward, grabbing the eel from the ground and pulling it away. Jack stumbled back, throwing the eel onto the pile. Toothless

was pushed against the back wall of the cave, roaring and spitting at Jack. Hiccup pushed himself back into a sitting position; two baby dragons fluttered in panic at Toothless' fading roars.

"-scared of eels," Hiccup finished, his heart hammering in his chest. Hiccup shot Jack a glare. "Didn't you know that? All dragons are afraid of eels, Jack."

Jack's eyes found his toes and Jack shook his head. Jack sat down heavily. "There goes breakfast, then," He let out a sigh and Hiccup stared at him, biting the inside of his cheek.

"Jack?"

Jack glanced up through his white bangs; Toothless had calmed down enough to back away from the cave wall but was casting Jack dirty looks on the sly. Hiccup played his hands, watching them with sudden interest. "Are you ...," Hiccup wet his lips. "Are you Jokul Frosti?"

Childhood memories blinked before Hiccup's eyes; snowball fights, laughter, fun and games - it was all there and so was Jack - wasn't he? - yes, he was! He was so familiar yet so faint and Hiccup's stomach rolled and fluttered as he relived those good times of childhood innocence.

Jack stared at Hiccup - a smile tugged at his lips and Jack couldn't help but surge closer, his eyes alight. Jack laughed, closing the distance between them and placing his cold hands over Hiccup's cool ones. "Was I that obvious?" Jack asked, his eyebrows quirked. The breath of winter and autumn mingled together and Hiccup's lashes fluttered. Hiccup then tried to stand abruptly, his mind frazzled and momentarily blown by this odd and unbelievable truth; but of course, he was missing a leg and he teetered down. Jack rushed forward to catch him but Hiccup caught himself and grabbed his leg, hurriedly slamming it over his stump. "I-I'm going to get breakfast," He said, his tone high and uneven. "Um ... Do you ...?"

Jack's heart fluttered when he thought Hiccup was asking him to join; instead, Hiccup was asking him if he still ate. Jack's smile drooped when Hiccup rephrased and then left when Jack gave him a small shake of the head. Toothless scooted from his spot of the cave until his head was level with Jack's; they both watched Hiccup work to catch some fish alas the boy and dragon were both focused on different points of him, one Hiccup's butt and the other the fish he was pulling from the lake. Toothless shot Jack a knowing look and Jack poked his tongue out, grabbing an eel by its tail and throwing it near the suddenly shrieking dragon. Jack couldn't help but smirk; he was beginning to get used to the fiery reptile ... and his master, of course.

...

Tink was in a hysterical frenzy when the Guardians arrived. She was close to tearing her hair out, her tinkling uncoherently even to Tooth's Baby Teeth, who were known for their excellent Fairy Speech. Bunnymund and North tried to awkwardly calm her down, which only caused her face to grow red and for her to singe North's beard. Tooth tried to relax her enough for her to explain the situation and Sandy kept creating images of the ship to try and convince everyone to go

look for evidence.

A third of the Council of Guardians was there - North, Bunny, Tooth and Sandy, obviously, but also the Leprechauns, The Lorax, The Leafmen and Queen Tara, and The Groundhog. North sighed, noticing Mother Nature, Father Time and Cupid astray from the group. North knew Nature most likely wouldn't show as the world could not go unattended for a moment unless you wanted a terrifying death toll - North decided he might as well fill the rest in.

Tink fluttered down until she was level with Tara; Tara held her hand as North began to explain the predicament, trying to ignore the tinkling of fresh fairy tears. North spread his large hands and addressed the group, "We must look for evidence - anything to show where Pitch went or where Peter is now." North started to say a large speech of what the Baby Teeth had told him of Tink's recalling of the event and was about to set everyone to work when a ship materialized behind him.

>Tim and Eric stepped from it, their shoes meeting the sand of the cliffside. North tried his best to ignore them, to finish his rousing speech, but Tim was already checking the time and poking the clockface for emphasis. North's shoulders slumped forward a bit and they all set to work, searching the last known whereabouts of Peter Pan.<p>

...

Tim didn't feel unease as his feet squealed against the bloodied deck of Hook's ship; Eric followed him, wincing as his white shoes became streaked in red and whining about how hard it was going to be to find someone to clean them. Tim was Death; a little bit of blood didn't scare him. Eric was the squeamish one; he'd already gotten sick twice and the ship wasn't even moving. Tim trudged forward, bending down to inspect grains of black sand which seemed to nip at his ankles.

Eric groaned, his suit tearing against a splintered side of the stern. "Oh, come on," He whined, staring at the shred in the fabric. He blew a stray hair from his face; it curled expertly at his breath and he watched Tim from behind. "Are we done yet?"

Tim ignored him, finding a small insignificant patch of sand; the grains glinted malevolently with the kiss of youth's blood and Tim's eyebrows pinched as they swirled together then bend forward, like a beckoning finger. Tim's eyes rose over the finger and they caught on the feather flapping against the breeze, the green of its fabric in the jaws of the ship's boards. Tim reached for it, plucked it up and inspected it, turning it over in his hands; with his attention on the hat, Tim had forgotten of the swirling sand which lazily swelled before leaping at him and gnashing its fine grains into the bare skin of his arm. Eric leapt over at Tim's surprised cry before shoving Tim from the striking sand; it dug through the fabric of Eric's pantleg, twisting into the flesh until golden ichor added a metallic hue to the mixed bloodtypes on the floor - the blood of the immortal, the eternally youthful and timeless Death.

Off in the distance, the tick and tock of a pocket watch sounded; the popping eyes of a crocodile broke the surface of the water. The crocodile's green skin was scarred with marks of battle, the only marks of the past; the crocodile hadn't a clue how he had received

them but he did know it had hurt. The crocodile's lean body broke the surface, its yellowed snout and hungry teeth grazing the water; its tail swung to and fro like that of a pendulum; the ticking and tocking met Tim's ears, his hand clutching the torn flesh of his arm, his fingers grazing bone, past generations of inky words dripping and smearing on the deck beneath his feet. Tim hurriedly helped Eric up and the two rushed to get from the boat; Tim had tucked the hat in his pant pocket and they would've gotten away if it hadn't been for the crocodile, its eyes popping hungrily over the water.

>Tim recognized the sounds of the clock; it had been one of his, after all. He'd gone in search of Peter to recruit him as a Guardian and was knocked from the sky by stones and instead of the croc biting into meat, he chomped down on the lapel of his suit and swallowed his clock whole. Or, maybe this was a different one and Tim's clock had found its way out the other end.
Eric glanced down at the sea, Tim beside him. The sand was growing, swelling; Tim knew it was only a matter of time so he steeled his courage and shoved himself and Eric from the rickety plank.

>Thankfully, Eric was equipped with wings; he just never let them show, as they were incredibly large and normally sent holes right through his dapper suits as it did at that moment. Two pricks formed in his back as he fell until the pricks broke through the layers of fabric and unfurled into thick white wings; Eric grabbed Tim's wrist and flew to the cliffside, much to the crocodile's obvious dismay.<p>

Eric dropped Tim on the edge and landed on his bleeding ankle but he stood his ground, smirking through the pain. "You know what they say about a man's wingspan," Eric quirked weakly, holding a hand out to help Tim up.

"You've been waiting all day for that, haven't you?" Tim asked.

Eric grinned. "But of course."

****alright guys more Guardians woo****

****Meet Cupid E. Valentine, Guardian of Love also known as Eric Valentine****

****The Lorax and The Leafmen are **_**not **_**the same thing. In my mind, The Lorax only shows up when he's needed like when The Once-ler was chopping down the trees. He was called to the meeting and he appeared because Mother Nature couldn't. The Leafmen protect the Queen and the Pods and keep The Rot from taking over.****

****Leprechauns - Guardians of Luck and Mischief****

****Groundhog - Guardian of Change (he's also extremely nervous which you'll figure later)****

****I updated a day late I apologise****

****I CAN'T THANK ANY OF YOU ENOUGH FOR ALL THE KIND WORDS ON THIS AND HOW MANY OF YOU ENJOY IT IT MAKES ME HAPPY 64 REVIEWS GUYS 64****

****I'm also going to go complete fangirl and buy a bunch of Peter Pan and Disney merch and cry a lot in them yup****

11. Chapter 11

Jack hefted himself up and followed Hiccup out into the open, the cool air embracing Jack and whispering through his hair. Hiccup was currently trying to tug a wire cage from under a thorny bush and let out a groan of frustration as he realized it was no use. Jack walked over and placed his hands on top of Hiccup's, tugging the cage from a knotted gnarl of thorns. Hiccup muttered his thanks and Jack nodded, his eyes glancing up as Hiccup walked away to the pond.

Jack aimlessly looked around the clearing, confused at what to do; his heart clenched when Jack's mind went straight to reasons as to _why_ Hiccup didn't really talk to him. It might've been shock - _no_ one really sees a legendary spirit of winter - or even resentment, for Jack had kept it secret.

Jack's eyes latched on the burning light deep within the pond; Hiccup hadn't noticed it yet. He might've had to believe in that, too, and Jack had yet to mention his mission here. Did he even want to now?

That was a dumb question; of course, he wanted to. He wanted to help the Guardians. He wanted to help Hiccup and the others he had yet to cross paths with. He didn't want to leave them all with a sense of diminishing hope that he would come to their rescue. He didn't want to leave him the way he had his sister.

Hiccup threw the cage into the water and sat down on his bent knees, awkwardly glancing back to see Jack standing off to the corner. _Was he really ...?_ Hiccup watched as Jack ran a hand through his hair and Hiccup's eyes widened, his gaze retreating back to the pond and task at hand. His eyes found Jack again, however, and stuck there, watching him as stooped down and picked up the last of the ashy sludge that had fallen from the heavens.

Hiccup watched as Jack blew into the sludge, watched as it frosted with ice and he molded it in his hands until it was a sphere of cold and ash; Jack looked up and pulled his arm back before chucking it across the clearing to the cave in which Toothless had tried to come out of. Toothless let out a roar as ice sprayed him and Jack grinned and gave an apologetic wave, "Sorry!"

Hiccup laughed slightly; Jack turned and met his gaze, his smile crinkling near his blue eyes. He hopped over and took a seat near Hiccup, peering eagerly at his freckled face. The two of them faced the pond, Hiccup's hand tight around the trigger on the cage, the two boys' hands mere inches apart. Water lapped against Jack's toes and the two watched the thin intricate artwork come to life until Hiccup said, "So ... All along, I've been laying next to a freaking god?"

Jack laughed, shaking his head, his hair bouncing with the movement. "No," Jack shrugged, "I don't know, I don't really consider myself a _god_. _Back where I'm from, I'm more of a, well ... a spirit."

Hiccup turned to him. "A spirit? Like ... you're ...?"

"Dead? Yeah," Jack kept his eyes to the pond and the ice he was creating.

"We Vikings, we have this belief," Hiccup began, "that all men have a spirit that protects them, guards them from harm." The two were silent, listening to the cracking of the ice and the fish swimming through the pond.

"I'm a Guardian," Jack said just as Hiccup had begun to continue by saying, "We call them Guardian Spirits." The two looked at one another, blue eyes meeting green.

Jack nervously looked away and Hiccup followed suit. "Back home, I'm a Guardian. Or, I was. It's complicated but ... I basically protect children."

Hiccup's heart sunk a bit. "I'm not a kid."

Jack's eyebrows furrowed. "No, no, I didn't mean-"

"Protect them from what?" Hiccup interrupted.

Jack took a deep breath. "You won't believe me."

"I'll always believe you, Jack," Hiccup countered.

Jack's lips parted at that and he sighed. "We protect them from The Boogeyman."

Hiccup remembered times of dark and cold when he used to sleep with his mother in fear; his father always said that being afraid was a one-way trip to exile but his mother seemed to understand and she always was there for Hiccup, telling him there was nothing fear - not dragons, not Bogeys, not the dark. She always told Hiccup he was her brave little warrior - which, in truth, he had been. That didn't stop his mind from pointing out his internal and external flaws to a hyphenated extreme.

Jack was silent, waiting for Hiccup's reply of how he never wanted to see Jack again or how he was insane and sick. Instead, Hiccup said, "He's real?"

The fear in Hiccup's voice was evident and Jack had to remember that Hiccup was only fifteen. He was only fifteen and Jack was expecting him to come along with him on a giant mission against a childhood fear and he expected them to win.

"Yeah. He's real."

Hiccup looked out at the pond, suddenly sick with anxiety. His knuckles had turned white around the cording attached to the cage.

"I-I'm here on a mission," Jack began, his voice faltering, "and this'll sound insane, but it's true. I'm on a mission from The Man in the Moon and I'm looking for three other heroes - the Defenders - and we're going to stop him from hurting anyone else."

Hiccup glanced at Jack, trying to process the information. Jack immediately regretted it and his shoulders tensed, awaiting Hiccup's

response. "I-I believe you, Jack," Hiccup started, "but ... It sounds crazy."

Jack nodded. "Yeah, it does."

"Who's this Defender you're looking for?" Hiccup asked, "Maybe I can help you find whoever it is."

Jack bit the inside of his suddenly throbbing cheek.

"Could you be _anymore _thick? It's you, Hiccup!" Jack and Hiccup jumped as Astrid walked over, rolling her eyes. Her braid slapped against her back and she hopped over a log to get to them.

"You heard all of that, didn't you?" Hiccup asked and she shrugged, saying, "I already knew some; came here, halfway through the rant and now I'm filled in."

She pinched Jack on his good cheek. "So, thanks, Frosti." He rubbed his cheek and muttered under his breath at her as she sat down between the two, smirking at them both. "May I ask _why _you two are out here, all alone, in breeding season?"

Hiccup was blushing so hard he couldn't even make himself correct her and explain to her that it was not breeding season at that moment in time and they hadn't been doing anything and they were friends and Jack was a god and Hiccup was a kid and-

"You're just jealous," Jack countered, wiggling his eyebrows, "that Hiccup and I would make exceptional love in the snow." Jack laughed with Astrid at the way Hiccup's face blew red like a fuse.

In order to keep the atmosphere light, Jack added, "It's a joke, Hiccup." Hiccup nodded, faking a tug on his cage and directing his attention to it so the two wouldn't pester him further.

Jack glanced at Astrid. "How long have you known?"

"Since your brawl with that insane dragon," Astrid's voice trailed away. "What was that thing, anyway?"

"One of Pitch's minions," Jack sighed.

The two were silent, watching Hiccup struggle with the cage and the fish and trip into the water and spit curses.

"He's serious, isn't he? This Pitch guy?"

"It's the belief that gets him, I think," Jack shrugged. "I would've done anything for belief. For memories."

Astrid stared at him. "Memories?"

Jack nodded. "Memories are what make or break you and I couldn't remember a thing."

...

Peter was having a very different time, however, as he stared through the bars of his cage. He glared at the sleek back of his captor; as

of nigh, he could remember mostly everything that had happened in his life. He wanted to be home and out of this cage and in his tree, playing with redskins and retelling the same adventure over and over to the mermaids. Instead, he watched the shadows dance along the walls and ceiling, teasing him with memories of innocence, when thimbles were kisses and pain was distrust and not the shed of blood and tears and the bubbling fear within him.

" ... You don't need to be afraid," Pitch tried, his hands tight behind his back.

Peter shrugged. "I thought that was what Bogeys did. Wanted fear."

Pitch shook his head. "No. We never want fear; it just helps to have it. What we do want, however, is belief." Pitch moved away from his position of staring at his own black globe, covered in golden blips of light that were even now lighting up with more hope, more belief, more wishing and dreaming and magic.

"Those lights are disgusting," Hibernus muttered, entering from the shadows. "You might want to get a skylight for that hole above, it's a bit flashy-"

"I don't need your advice, Winter," Pitch snapped. "Espcially on interior design."

"Just because I have such a polarizing exterior doesn't mean I can't make this place look lavish," Winter grumbled, facing the shadow cages. "When will we do this, eh?"

"Soon. Have you heard anything from the mole?"

"Not yet but soon enough," Old Man Winter shrugged. "We've got the upper hand, defiantly."

this was almost late and not long at all omfg but hi guys i missed you all~

it will be longer next time I'm sorry

12. Chapter 12

"How far are we going?" Bunny asked, following the stout furry creature deeper into the humid leafy forest.

The Groundhog shrugged and continued, trudging through the grass and over mounds of dirt, his stubby legs uprooting clumps of dirt as he struggled to move ahead all the while glancing around the forest, his nose and head nervously twitching at every unseen noise.

Bunny kept a paw on his boomerang, following The Groundhog through the forest. Bunny huffed, heat seeping into his fur like the sweat that slicked the pads of his paws. His tail twitched as he pushed a trendil of leaves away, awkwardly hopping over roots and rocks. "Where are we going?"

"W-why are r-rabbits s-so n-nervous?" The Groundhog stuttered, his

tiny eyes slicing across the trees.

Bunny grumbled under his breath, adjusting the strap of leather that held several pastel egg bombs. The Groundhog glanced back, nervously clinking his claws against each other, watching the trees and the bushes.

Bunny sighed, his blue-grey fur slick and matted with sweat. He rolled his green eyes as he recalled his argument with North about him being paired with the insufferable rodent; The Groundhog was worse than Bunny when it came to situations like these and already, Bunny could hear the distinct grinding of teeth ahead of him.

The Groundhog's eyes flicked through the canopy of trees; the humidity was sticky and The Groundhog thought bitterly back to the fact that he should have been hibernating by now, tucked in a burrow somewhere in Alaska, where it was cold and pleasant, not here where it was hot and horrid.

In the corner of The Groundhog's eyes was a blur of black amongst the throng of green; then another blur, a streak of red. Hiding among the trees and plants were flashes of red and The Groundhog's stomach flopped.

The Groundhog had stopped walking and Bunny, who had also spotted the flashes of red against the trees, ran into his short curved back, nearly toppling over him. The Groundhog's dense coat of fur stood on end as his eyes flicked over his surroundings; Bunny held his boomerangs at the ready.

A blur of black started up behind The Groundhog's back, growing slightly; Bunny was to The Groundhog's back, watching the trees for movement, for the first distinction of a fight. The blur grew into the small black form of a boy, his hand crooked in a forced position as he stood in between the two furry Guardians; the reds in the trees grew at the sight of the shadow. The shadow stopped down and its hand grabbed a fistful of frosted guard hairs near The Groundhog's back, causing The Groundhog to let out a squeak of pain and fear, turning swiftly to claw at the shadow; instead of connecting with the boy, The Groundhog's thick claws caught in Bunny's back and slashed down, painting the grey-blue fur a harsh red. Out of the thick jungle came the uproar of redskins who had been following the boy demon since its sighting at their camp.

A whisper in the wind chuckled, "_I suppose that means six more weeks of winter, then, eh?_"

...

Hiccup ended up catching a few fish and was burning them over a makeshift fire he and Toothless had put together; Astrid stayed with them, asking Jack to tell her everything he knew and everything he was planning on doing, where he would have to go. He waited until Hiccup had taken a seat near the two to listen in before he shot into his explanation.

"Well," He began, rubbing the back of his neck. "Last year, we defeated Pitch - barely - and I guess Manny thought we just weren't powerful enough this time. So he sent me out to go and find three Defenders and he gave me this bag of books and hourglasses and it's

my job to bring them all back to stop Pitch before he gains too much power."

Astrid bit into her fish that Hiccup had passed her; she wiped her mouth on her arm and asked, "What's an hourglass?"

Jack laughed and stood up, walking over to the lake. "That's a good question," He said, shoving his hand through sheets of ice to pull the auburn figure from the water. He walked over and handed it to her; Hiccup walked over to peer at it with Astrid, their eyes wide in awe. Hiccup took it and rolled it over in his hands, the orange light highlighting his features; Jack caught himself staring and glanced down at his bluing toes.

"That one's yours, Hic," Jack said, careful not to stare this time as he glanced up.

"What does it do?" Hiccup asked, about to turn it upside down.

Jack threw a hand out and shouted, "I wouldn't!"

Hiccup's eyebrows furrowed. "Huh?"

Jack sighed in relief, his hand moving back to rest near his side. "When you turn it, the Sands swirl. When the Sands swirl, you go either back in time or forward in time, depending on the direction you turn the hourglass. When you go back in time - " ****(don't go back in time, get Direct TV today!)****

"I think I get it," Hiccup cut in.

Jack shrugged. "I was just making sure."

Hiccup's fingers clasped around the cool middle of the hourglass. "When were you planning on telling me this?"

Jack shrugged. "Whenever it seemed logical, I guess."

"_Oh_, because _this _seems like a logical time," Hiccup rolled his eyes.

"Well, yeah - " Jack tried but Astrid interrupted them.

"What about the other two?" She asked, taking another bite of fish.

"Haven't met them yet," Jack said, shrugging.

Astrid raised an eyebrow. "When will you go?"

Hiccup perked up, meeting Jack's face. "You told my dad you were going on an expedition."

Jack nodded. "For the Will-o-Wisps. They'll lead me to the next Defender."

"That's next week, Jack," Astrid said. "Stoick and Spitelout are going; foreign affairs or something with The Bear King. They're all going on a hunting trip. They're letting some boys come, too; they say it's the 'trip to become men.'"

Hiccup smiled crookedly. "Let me guess; you asked to come along?"

Astrid grumbled and Hiccup laughed but Jack was suddenly far away from the conversation at hand; his mind wandered away to the hunting trip, The Bear King and the other two hourglasses tucked deep in his silver satchel under a pile of fur blankets.

He needed to do some reading.

...

Tinkerbell half-heartedly fluttered beside Queen Tara; she placed a hand on Tink's shoulder as Ronin discussed the current situation with The Baby Teeth, who tittered to Tooth who explained to North what Ronin was saying. North would then reply to Tooth and so forth. Their version of telephone was excruciatingly slow yet they could at least exchange thoughts.

North sighed loudly, regretting his thick coat and long beard. He glanced through the trees and vines and thought of Peter, wherever he was, wherever Pitch had taken him. North felt a burden crushing the breath from his lungs; if Pitch did anything to him ...

Tooth knew North was taking the absense of the youngest Guardian hard; she defiantly was, too. Peter was the one Guardian that she'd never collected teeth from; he'd left for Neverland long before his first tooth wiggled. That was one of the reasons for his faulty memory; for all of the memory loss within Neverland.

His memories would forever be a mystery to him.

...

Peter stared through the bars, his arms crossed over his knees. His shadow was back, once again chained in his own cage. Peter glanced lazily at the man who stared at him through the bars. The man racked his knuckles against the cage and Peter looked away.

Hibernus puffed on wintry breath, pulling a shard of ice and throwing it into the cage with Peter's shadow. It passed through him, but Peter winced, a new icy cut glistening on his cheek. Peter stiffened, his hand pressing firmly against his torn side as Hibernus gave Peter's cheek a stroke through the bars.

"Every child must grow up, Pan," Hibernus whispered. "Every child must lose his innocence."

78 reviews heh heh skdjfhlagkasl;hgro

You're all so lovely I adore you guys

Hibernus is really creepy and NO HIBERNUS WILL **_NOT **_**DO WHAT YOU THINK OKAY I AM NOT THAT CRUEL A PERSON**

... or am I

((I'm really not))

13. Chapter 13

Bunny was officially sick and tired of Neverland.

After that surprise attack from the redskins, they'd captured the two oversized rodents and were dragging them to their camp with tightly slashed wrists that connected, restricting their chances of racing off, no doubt. To make matters worse, Bunny's new wound stung and he knew it was bleeding fiercely; a redskin poked him near it and Bunny snarled at him. The redskin jumped back, mumbling to the others, their brows furrowed, trying to figure what they were and why the one with the large ears had such a blistering attitude.

The Groundhog was a wreck, his face stricken with fear. He was whispering under his breath about seeing a shadow and Bunny rolled his eye. "You scared of a little shadow, mate?" Bunny whispered so that only The Groundhog could hear, "I'd be more worried of the situation at hand - or paw, as it seems."

The two were shoved through curtains of vines and creepers, past rock formations and trees; in the distance was the chirping of birds and the occasional splash of the Lagoon. Bunny caught his breath when they could see the tops of branches jutting from tanned hide tents and the wisp of cooking fires curling against the pastel blue sky; the weathered faces of the people stared at Bunny and The Groundhog in pleasant surprise, thinking both of the animal gods and how content their meal would be, as the rabbit was even taller than their late Chief had been and the odd hunched thing had decorative claws that looked similar to their hide-cutting knives and pendants that hung from their flashy beaded necklaces.

A hollow drumming had resounded at the sight of their Chiefess, Tiger Lily. Her glistening black hair flowed down her back like an ebony river, her caramel skin shining beneath white and red clay that painted her face and arms with decorative titles of authority. She wore a collection of leather, that was both feminine yet the armor over her dress suggested otherwise as did the knives jutting from the slash of leather across her waist and the scars that marred her arms; even so, she was probably only fourteen, perhaps less and Bunny couldn't wrap his head around how a girl so small could cause his fur to puff out in sudden tension.

The girl raised a hand and the drumming silenced; the hill was quiet despite the crackling of the fire and the light breeze that evoked a twitch of Bunny's ears. Her eyes, Bunny noticed, were dark brown and old, much unlike the face they were set in which was light and youthful. Her head was held high and the breeze picked up strands of her hair, twirling them in the sky, reflecting silver, grey. Under close inspection, the rest of the redskins had the glimmer of silver hairs which confused Bunny; didn't everyone suffer from the curse of never aging in Neverland?

The girl, Tiger Lily, spoke; her voice was a tad croaky, more unconfident than her demeanor suggested but Bunny reminded himself that it was a child playing an adult's role. The girl's lip and chin trembled, her eyes glistening with the start of a tear she refused to let out as she asked, "Where is Peter?"

Bunny raised a black brow, inclining his ear to hear her better. "You

mean you ... don't know?"

Her nostrils flared, her hand suddenly on the handle of a stone blade, a tear leaking from her eye and rolling down her cheek. "Where. Is. Peter," She repeated through tightly clenched teeth.

Bunny shared a confused glance with The Groundhog. "Um, I don't know, mate," Bunny began, "We're trying to figure that out, too - "

In a flash, a blur of golden skin and speckled stone, sleek black hair and old brown eyes, Bunny had the pointed end of a stone knife underneath his Adam's Apple, which bounced with a gulp, his eyes suddenly wide and fearful. Quietly, Tiger Lily whispered; Bunny's sensitive ears picked up the sound of a despair and forced authority as she struggled to keep a threatening tone; "This island is stuck; it keeps us stuck, only when there is Peter. Peter is not here, yes? Then we age and we die. Chief is dead; we all will be dead. _Where is Peter_?"

...

Jack stared at the crinkled pages of the teal book, already bored out of his mind; there was honestly nothing exciting happening in this book and he blamed the fact that it was informative.

It's only boring because you're learning, his mind snapped and Jack instantly told it to pipe down, trying to think about reading this to Jamie.

His heart clenched a bit as his mind began to paint the scene of Jamie's bedroom, with airplanes and flying dinosaurs strung on invisible cord from the ceiling and books lining the walls and floor and shelves; a replica of the planets dangling from another section of the ceiling, the moon across the planets on another wall; Jack with his arm around Jamie's shoulders, Jack's cold feet brushing Jamie's warm toes as Jamie pestered Jack with questions about the rough teal book in Jack's hand. "What's it about?" Jamie wide brown eyes peered into Jack's face expectantly.

Jack glanced at the cover. "I think it's about ...," He ran his thumb over the spine, "perhaps," he cracked the book open a little bit, jutting his thumb onto a page and sneaking a look at the chapter title, "... Will-O-the-Wisps!"

Jamie narrowed his eyes at Jack. "You looked at it!"

Jack shook his head. "I did not!"

Jamie stuck his tongue out at Jack, crossing his arms. "What's a willowist?"

Jack chuckled, ruffling Jamie's hair. "It's 'Will-O-the-Wisps,'" Jack corrected, shrugging, "and I don't know. I guess that's why you're making me read this, eh?"

Jamie shrugged, snuggling into Jack's side, peering at the open page. Jack began to read from the page, his voice already taking on a rather bored drone. Jamie shot Jack a look and Jack tried to make himself sound intrested in the topic at hand. After a couple of

minutes, Jack now knew that the Wisps were actually common folklore from all around; these flames of ghoulish light lured children to their Fates (or deaths, more like) but were also seen as mischievous ghouls of dead family or friends, helping those in need; it seems the Wisps' intentions were only known by those they acted with and Jack stared at the book, alone in a room full of sketches drawn by a Viking boy, and he thanked the invisible boy beside him that his mind had transported. The boy looked at him, puzzled, as Jack stood and left the room; the boy whispered, "But, Jack, I'm just your imagination," before vanishing in a flush of sudden air.

...

Jamie stirred a spoon in his hot chocolate, forcing air out of his nose in a huff. Sophie sat near him in her own oversized wooden chair, licking furiously at the back of her spoon before plunging it back into the mug. Jamie's mom scrubbed the corners of Sophie's mouth with a cloth, taking the seat across from Jamie as she did so.

Jamie absently stared at his mug; it had a stereotypical Santa Clause face stamped on it, with deep red cheeks and a fluffy beard and a chubby kindly face. Jamie finally spoke up, "He doesn't even look like that."

Jamie's mom raised an eyebrow, smiling at her son; she was surprised that he was finally talking. "What, sweetie?"

"Santa. He doesn't look like that," Jamie said, licking his spoon. He tapped the spoon against the ceramic, causing it to clink. "He's not fat; sure, he has a belly but that's because of all the cookies and milk and stuff. He also has tattoos that are really cool; Mom, when I get older, can I get a tattoo like Santa? Oh, yeah, his name's not even Santa. It's North; geddit, like North Pole? Oh! Did you know the elves don't even make the toys? Jack told me the Yetis do it, like Big Foot and The Abom - "

"Jamie," His mom cut in.

"Yeah?" Jamie asked, blinking.

"Jamie, I ...," His mom wrung the cloth in her hands, glancing at Jamie. Jamie met her gaze which caused her to look away from his eyes; the eyes of an innocent boy she was about to crush. She sighed, her shoulders slumping with what she had to do; with what every mother had to do. "Jamie. You're not a kid anymore."

Jamie looked up, confused by his mother's serious tone; she rarely ever used it, not since his father's death. There were tears in her eyes and Jamie felt his chest tug as he asked, "Mom? Mom, are you okay?"

"Your father ... He always loved Christmas. He always loved the presents, the excitement leading up to the day, reading The Night Before Christmas to you, seeing your face light up when you got past the stairs," She shook her head and sighed. "I think it's time we let go, Jamie."

Jamie stared at her; his mom rarely ever talked about his dad and when she did, she was never so serious. His dad never liked being serious; he liked having fun and living in the moment. "What do you

mean?"

"I mean, all of this, Jamie! This - _this talk_- about Santa Clause and Jack Frost! I know you want a male figure in the house - I want you to have a male figure, I do - but enough of this!" She pursed her lips and stared at her son through her fogging glasses. She took a deep breath. "Enough of this, Jamie."

Sophie looked away from her spoon, glancing between her mother and brother, green eyes wide in interest. "Enough of what?" Jamie asked, his voice breaking. "Mom, I saw them! Sophie was there, too! Remember, Soph?"

"Bunny - hop, hop, hop!" Sophie said, smiling widely.

"Jamie - "

"No, Mom! You're wrong! They are real!" Jamie shouted, standing abruptly from his chair. He raced for the stairs, tears in his eyes. He ran into his room, slamming the door shut, a sob rushing up his throat; he threw himself onto his bed, crying into his pillow. He screamed into the pillowcase, turning on his side to look out the window at the bright shining moon. "Jack, where are you?"

****ANGST MAN****

****Headcanon: Jamie's mom thinks Jamie invented Jack to be his 'fatherly figure' as their personalities are alike and tells him Jack's not real and then Jack doubts himself and yeah.****

****YOU'RE ALL SO LOVELY AND I'M SORRY FOR NOT ANSWERING MANY REVIEWS BUT I WILL EVENTUALLY****

****I'M ALSO WATCHING DEATHLY HOLLOWES HUR HUR HUR****

14. Chapter 14

Jack stared at the armour plating Gobber had fixed him up with, turning it over in his hands, watching it reflect light and the spiderwebs of ice that had already collected over the metal. The chestplate was lean and lightweight; frost swirled up the front and the back, collecting in flakes along the dip of his spine and the shoulders. Jack placed the armour plate back on the dirt floor of Hiccup's hut, awaiting his return; by now, Hiccup had to know where Jack was going and why he had the armour in a defrosting pile.

Jack was just going to have to convince Hiccup to come with him.

Stoick said the quest for the will-o'-the-wisps would be a test of strength, courage and patience; they only came out when they were ready to take you to your Fate. Jack didn't exactly like the nonchalant way they spoke of their Fates, as if it were a prize to die - Jack could defiantly beg to differ - alas, they were Vikings and as Hiccup said, they were all for 'Death or Glory' (even if glory meant death).

Jack leaned back, his leather pants digging into the dirt as did his bare soles. Jack thought distantly of the other Guardians and how

much was riding on him to get the Defenders together - his stomach twisted at the thought of messing up. He was already behind, it seemed; they had maybe two days before they set off for the trip with The Bear King but with every sleepless night Jack sat through, he felt like he was letting them all down again. He was letting down North, Bunny, Sandy, Tooth - and worst of all, he was letting down the kids, the believers.

Hiccup pushed through the thick door, finding Jack staring distantly at his hands; his shoulders were hunched, his eyes unfocused. Jack hadn't even heard Hiccup come in. Hiccup walked over, his eyes landing briefly on the pile of armour before they returned to Jack's weary face. Hiccup had never seen Jack like this; he was always so happy, so full of life, so fun ... seeing him like this, it crushed Hiccup. Hiccup took a seat beside him, his metal leg leaving a scar across the dirt floor; Hiccup awkwardly placed his arm against Jack's shoulders, biting the inside of his cheek. "What're you thinking about?" He asked, breaking the silence.

"Screwing up," Jack hadn't even felt the words come out of his mouth, he was so out of it. Hiccup's arm, awkward as it was, should've been warming Jack's stomach with the flutter of butterflies; instead, Jack felt his heart drop. He was expecting Hiccup - this kid, who would do anything for anyone, who had a family and friends and a village to care for - to just drop all that and follow Jack on a mission for certain death and despair? Jack closed his eyes, not with a quick flutter, but a painful wince - Hiccup watched him, his fingers twisting against the cloth of Jack's shirt.

"Jack," Hiccup said aloud, his voice rising slightly, "Jack, look at me."

Jack didn't. He turned his head away, his fingers twitching; if his staff were down here, he could already be off, in search of the next Defender, instead of here, forging false comfort from a boy who had a better future as the next Chief of Berk, Astrid by his side ...

"Jack," Hiccup snapped sharply. "Fine. Listen then."

Jack sighed but gave a single jerk of the head, signalling to Hiccup that he would indeed listen.

"If you're as much of a screw-up as you think," Hiccup began, "then why would the Guardians pick you? Why would they send you off in search of three Defenders?"

Jack was silent, staring at the wall of the hut, his eyes a bit less cloudy.

"Because they trust you," Hiccup continued, "because they believe in you."

Jack flinched; his wrist twisted, digging his palm hard into the dirt. Frost blossomed beneath his hand and Jack felt his cheek pulse, the black spiderweb throb - he needed to get away, he needed to find the next Defender, he needed to stop Pitch -

Hiccup gripped Jack's shirt as Jack tried to leap to his feet; Hiccup wrenched him back down to the ground, noticing how glassy Jack's eyes

looked, how the black spiderweb pulsed beneath a translucent layer of pale skin. Hiccup felt an overpowering sense of longing - he needed Jack to stay, to calm down, to not do anything rash - so Hiccup did a reckless thing, something a Viking boy and a winter spirit were not supposed to do.

Autumn and Winter met one another with a kiss of stunned lips.

...

Eric and Tim walked along the cliff, Eric's wings tainted red with blood. Tim clutched his own bleeding forearm, an eye blazing silver, another gold; the skin on his arm came in slow thin layers, the blood growing hard and dark red, loosing colour until all that was left of the encounter with the crocodile was a long pale scar.

Eric, on the other hand, fretted over his wings, his voice reaching an octave no male should've achieved, "Tim, oh gods, Tim, what will I do? Does bleach work with wings? Oh gods, Tim - "

"Stop being such a woman, Eric," Tim remarked snidely, flexing his arm with the regenerated skin.

"Really, because, gods forbid, if one of your _clocks _would've gotten so much as a millisecond out of line -," Eric began, resentment bubbling up his throat. Tim rolled his multicoloured eyes before focusing them on Eric's wings; after a minute or so, they were pearly white.

Eric gave a sigh of relief, trying to catch a look of them as he walked beside Tim.

Tim glanced at Eric. "We should probably go tell North about what happened."

Eric shrugged. "You're the Time guy, man - shouldn't you know when to tell him?"

Tim's eyebrows furrowed. "Wait ... Are we talking about the same thing?"

Eric glanced at him. "Well, if we're both talking about how ironic the fact that Hiccup and Jack will be forced on a boat to go see The Bear King - when they're my favourite ship right beside Romeo and Juliet - then yes."

Tim stared at Eric. "Yeah, I wasn't - "

" - Oh."

"Yeah."

The two stared at each other for a moment, the breeze of the never aging running through their hair; Tim snapped out of it first, his head jerking to the side. "You smell that?"

Eric blinked, turning his head in the direction Tim was staring in. "What is it?"

Tim pulled a pocketwatch from the shreds of his suit, glancing momentarily at the clockface. He concentrated on the face; the hands of the clock began to tick back. "It's gonna be smoked rabbit in a moment," Tim said, the hands ticking back swiftly.

Eric smirked slightly as Tim poised his thumb over the jut of metal out of the top of the watch. "What? No time pun?" Eric teased and Tim rolled his eyes, saying, "I'll think of something later," before pressing his thumb down, sending the two a few minutes into the past.

...

The breaths of autumn and winter mingled, Hiccup's lips numb and Jack's lips exceedingly warm. Jack's eyes fluttered open, blue meeting green; Hiccup stared at Jack, suddenly too aware of Jack's jawline and the pile of armour and the pained expression on Jack's face as he stared at Hiccup, taking in the splotches of colour sprinkled on his flushed cheeks and the way his crooked teeth poked over his cold lips as he took a breath.

Jack took in everything he could see of Hiccup, wanting a fresh image in his mind; he wanted to know exactly where each freckle was, how his eyes looked in this light, how his nose shadowed his cheeks, how his fingers anxiously twirled around each other. Jack didn't want to remember the look of realisation on Hiccup's face or how his shoulders hunched or how easy the kid looked to breaking down - he wanted to remember him happy and colourful and lively - and so Jack wrapped Hiccup in a hug, already feeling his body shake and he pressed his lips against Hiccup's hair, moving down to leave a kiss on his nose.

"It's gonna be alright, Hic," Jack reassured, holding the boy close. "I'm going to protect you."

Hiccup pushed away from Jack, staring incredulously into his face. "Yeah? Then who's going to protect you?"

The two were forced apart at the creaking of the door; they both lurched away, faces mirroring guilt. Astrid poked her head in, Toothless shoving the door aside to rush to Hiccup, his tongue lolling. Astrid pulled Jack's staff in behind her, tossing it to him; he caught it, casting her a confused glance.

Astrid smiled, walking into the hut to untie her belt; the knife sheath clanged against the table as she tossed it down. She glanced back at Jack, his eyebrows raised. "You need to keep a better eye on that stick, Jack," Astrid told him. "Spitelout tried to use it as firewood."

Jack paled, his eyes wide; his hands wrapped around the staff protectively.

Hiccup shot him a look and Jack gave a fragile smile, shrugging. Astrid glanced at the two, already certain something was different; she didn't press, however, instead she gave Hiccup a look of disapproval and asked, "Hiccup, where's your armour? Don't tell me it's still at Gobber's - "

Hiccup glanced at her. "I - uh - "

"I'll get it, then," Astrid sighed, turning to walk out.

"No, um, I'll do it," Jack said, standing, pulling his staff up with him. "I'll do it, Astrid, it's fine."

Astrid glanced at him. "We'll go together."

Jack shrugged. "Alright. Let's set off."

The two moved to the door, both sending last glances at the confused freckled boy still getting a tongue-bath from his dragon; when the door had closed behind Jack, Hiccup held up a feeble hand to prevent his face from being licked. With his lips warming, forcing the cold away, Hiccup touched them with his free hand, his stomach flopping and flipping like a live fish, Jack's doing the same.

Astrid glanced back, noting Jack lingered behind near the hut. He glanced up, noticing for the first time that she was waiting for him; he flashed her a smile - one less cheerful than the ones she'd seen before - and the two walked up the trail to Gobber's hut, Jack's hand clenched against his staff, the bark digging into his flesh, blue frost and white ice flowing from his palm - and even now, with splinters biting into his skin, the only pain he could feel was the pain of knowing that he was never going to be able to protect himself, not with Hiccup as a beautiful colourful distraction, one well worth the risk.

****GUYS. FROZEN UK TRAILER. GOING TO WATCH. AND CRY. AND OBSESS. AND JOIN FANDOM.****

****also Once Upon A Time comes on again and they go to Neverland and Peter Pan. my feelings****

****I also kinda want to write a story about Eugene called The Adventures of Flynnnigin Rider (like the stories he heard) but more about how his life as Flynn Rider came to be I don't know what do you guys think****

****oh yeah and Hijack kiss heh heh heh -tears-****

****NINETY REVIEWS. WHAT. FIFTY FOLLOWS. HUH. THIRTY-FOUR FAVOURITES. I CAN'T EVEN. I LOVE YOU GUYS SO MUCH****

****-insert invitation for people to talk to me about Frozen bc I need Frozen friends you feel-****

15. Chapter 15

Hiccup was pretty sure he never wanted to see water again.

Jack explained to him that he lived on an Isle, surrounded by water; in return, Hiccup punched him in the arm before wrenching off the side of the boat.

"That's not very Viking-like," Jack snickered.

"It's not very lady-like either," Astrid quipped, jerking with her arms as she pushed the oar through another wave of water.

Hiccup wiped his mouth on his sleeve, grumbling, before taking a seat behind Astrid and thrusting his freckled hands around the oar end. Jack took the seat behind Hiccup, pushing off the bench with his feet to whisper in the Viking's ear, "So, you ready?"

Hiccup wasn't sure what Jack was asking; the question was flexible enough to mean anything. Was he ready to go on this expedition, in which Jack would move on to the next Defender? Was he ready to drop everything and go with Jack? What was he supposed to be ready for?

Jack awaited an answer; he didn't know what answer, but he wanted to hear Hiccup's voice. He wanted to hear the boy say something. He'd been a little distant since their kiss and Jack really didn't know what to think. Since when did Autumn seem so far from Winter?

Jack sighed, leaning back, pumping the oar; the wind rifled through his hair and he looked to the sparse clouds over the turquoise sky; the nearer and nearer they got to The Bear King, the clearer the sky became and the warmer it felt on Jack's skin. Soon, a sheen of sweat glistened on his face; he began to wonder if Manny had thought this through as he gave the oar another pump with slick fingers; his head felt feverish and he wondered if the waters farther from Berk carried less sea monsters or not. The curve of a grey-green hump and long neck against the bright blue sky seemed to beg to differ and Jack blew air out his nose in a huff, ultimately annoyed at the blunt answer from the universe.

Gobber steered the ship; Stoick and Spitelout rowed the backmost oars, strengthening the ship's advance. The rest of the Vikings - most of them Dragon Trainers, like Hiccup - rowed vigorously, their helmets tilting lopsidedly. From ahead came the pleasant relief of cool shadows, thanks to the dragons soaring along with the ship. Toothless mainly hovered over Hiccup but would drift to Jack occasionally; Jack still felt uncomfortable under darkness after seeing the shade of the boy.

Jack was shook from his thoughts when Stoick shouted in his ear. "Oi! Jack, how are yeh holding up?" He placed a massive hand on Jack's shoulder, which looked puny and breakable in comparison. Jack nodded meekly, forcing his aching arms into another row, his bones creaking; they weren't used to this much manual labor. The most they knew was fun - throwing snowballs, evoking everyone's inner kid - and that wasn't work. It was now but it had never been before.

Hiccup glanced back, catching Jack's eye. Hiccup was surprised at how florid Jack's cheeks had become the warmer the temperature had risen and that some of Jack's hair was stuck to Jack's forehead, dripping like icicles. Hiccup gave him a pointed look, making sure his concern was evident; Jack shrugged, throwing his tired arms into another row. Hiccup glared over his shoulder at Jack and said loudly, "Jack, you don't look so good."

Jack shot Hiccup a dangerous look, but Stoick was already up and inspecting Jack's face closely; "They don't have much labor up in Jotunheim, have they?" Stoick asked.

Jack shook his head, his teeth gritting. "Just fun, sir."

"And the heat - you're not used to it, eh?" Stoick scratched his head and jerked his chin to the dragons above. "You'll have to take flight, then - it's cooler up there than down here. The fresh air'll do you good." He patted Jack on the shoulder before telling Hiccup to call Toothless down.

Hiccup shouted Toothless' name; Toothless drifted lower, his feet landing on the deck near Gobber for Jack to hop on. The dragon and Jack eyed one another and Gobber cursed under his breath when the dragon let out a spark of flame. Hiccup turned and shouted at Jack to behave; Jack rolled his eyes and straddled the dragon's back. He barely had time to get his other leg situated against the dragon's scaly hide when Toothless jumped from the ship into the sky.

Jack's nails skittered over scales, trying to grab leverage against the wind's force; he knew if he fell, the wind would initially catch him. The aftermath of flying, however, was not something Jack wanted to explain, so instead, he whispered to the wind, goading it keep him against the dragon.

Hiccup smirked, watching Toothless flying haphazardly, trying to buck Jack off; he was impressed by how well Jack was holding on. Astrid glanced up, rolling her eyes, sporting a smile on her lips as Jack shouted, "Land ahoy!" as The Scottish Highlands, lush with greenery, blurred against the flush of blue.

...

"They're already advancing to the next Defender," Gothel spoke, her tone icy, her arms crossed as she glared at the back of Pitch's head.

"I'm aware," Pitch replied, his back to Gothel; he stared at his reflection in the glittering black ice of the sculpture, at the shadows frozen within. Pitch trailed a crooked nail against the numbing cold, his gold-silver irises fixated on one of the shades - the shadow that had once been a young girl, one he had cherished in a past life, one his heart was far too dark and cold and tortured to remember, alas, to remember while he was awake, at least.

"Are we just going to sit here and wait for them to destroy us," Gothel snapped, "because I am sick and tired of being beaten by all this nonsense - "

Pitch shook his head. "No. Today, we act. We just need to await the signal."

...

Tim was pretty sure it had never snowed in Neverland.

He blamed that explanation mainly on the way the redskins completely forgot about The Groundhog and Bunny, whom Tim and Eric were about to bust in and save; instead, snow had begun to fall - a dusting at first, then a full-blown blizzard.

The other Guardians had arrived; the dusting had brought up hope that Jack was back until the snow had begun coming down in blankets. Tinkerbell had to be beneath North's fur hat to keep her wings from shattering; the Forest Guardians rode freezing Baby Teeth; Tooth

zipped forward through the winter wasteland that had been so full of life just before.

The redskins were screaming, shouting - all but Tiger Lily; she was calm and collected albeit a little confused by the cold white that rested on her bare shoulders. Bunny pulled his boomerang from its sheath, knowing that for once Jack wasn't playing; Jack would've come out by now. No, this wasn't Jack Frost; it was something else. _Someone else._

There was a dusty croak of a chuckle and the snow swirled and swelled; vision was obscured only by blinding white and the rush of biting cold. Tim held a hand before his eyes; he felt a torrent of wind chill the back of his neck and Tim's eyes snapped open, whirling around to kick the offender. The kick hit a chunk of snow; again, he kicked behind at the feeling of forced breath being blown across his neck. He couldn't feel the cold - he was only numb; he barely even noticed the icicles poking from his skin or the clear ice over the back of his neck.

In minutes, the storm was over and a Guardian was gone - all except his icy replica jutting from a mound of snow over the once spring-green grass.

...

"All according to plan," Pitch smirked, inspecting the shivering Guardian of Time. Pitch tugged the ice-crusting blazer of the man's suit, withdrawing a silver hourglass. At The Boogeyman's touch, the sand turned black; the sand began to twist and writhe, like a living thing. A twisted grin remained on Pitch's face as he gave the hourglass a shake; the space behind Pitch opened into a spinning vortex of jagged black sand.

Gothel suppressed an eye roll; the boy in the cage was more focused on the nearly frozen man that had arrived. Old Man Winter jerked his head at Tim, asking, "What would you like me to do with him while you're gone?"

"Oh, be _courteous_," Pitch smirked, sticking a foot into the portal, "show him our welcome committee, would you?"

Gothel sighed. "When should we expect your return?"

"I'll only be a minute; I just need to settle affairs with a witch and resurrect a demon-bear," Pitch then hopped into the churning vortex of Time, popping his head through the wooden head of the bear the witch had been wittling. He grinned at the childhood fear suddenly overtaking her eyes as he said, "Hello again, Boo; haven't seen any blue-and-purple monsters lately, have you?"

****Headcanon:** Boo (from Monsters Inc.) is actually the witch/wittler from Brave who goes back in time in search of Sully. ((there's a huge conspiracy theory online over it if you want to look into it; in the film, there is also a carving of Sully in the wood among the wittler's inventory))******

****I want to thank you all for all the reviews (96!), follows (51!) and favourites (35!); that's so fantastic!****

****It also snowed A TON in South Dakota and it's only October; Jack is getting all on Hiccup, I'm sure of it.****

****THE RACE FOR THE DEFENDERS IS ON.****

16. Chapter 16

The Scotland Highlands were beautiful, even Jack had to admit; it was the perfect image of rolling evergreen hills and adult pines, horse-trodden dirt tracks and weathered stone buildings and castles. It was a poet's inspiration, what with the Fire Falls and streams and the warm caress of the summer sun against exposed flesh - which was the exact reason Jack evidently pulled a hood over his wet white hair, both to avoid question and the burning slap of heat that was breathing down his neck.

Stoick led the way from the port, where they were greeted by the townspeople, bearing flags and open arms for the annual Sighting and Hunt for the Wisps. Jack stood back behind the horned helmets of the Vikings, keeping the shadow of the hood over his face, inspecting the people with quick eyes, trying to find one that looked to be Defender material.

A big man in a red-and-green plaid kilt and leather armour came forward - Jack's eyes caught on the thick wooden stump in place of the man's foot, before inspecting the man's face. Jack noted the silver throughout his fiery red hair, thick mustashe and whiskery chin. His eyes were a bright clear blue and his crooked wide smile both unnerved Jack and made him feel welcome. His nose was crooked, signifying it had been broken. He was large man, almost as large as Stoick - Jack had a vast idea as to how the two got along when he shouted, "Stoick! Nice to see you again!"

Stoick's mustashe lifted with a smile as the two exchanged a handshake, before colliding shoulders and laughing heartily. Jack looked up and down the crowd of people, noticing a woman with extremely long dark brown hair, striped with silver near her face; she wore an elegant green gown that glittered with silver thread in the sunlight. Three young boys, at least seven years each, with identical heads of orange curls and mischievous smiles gazed at the Vikings, whispering in hushed tones; Jack could feel their excitement in the air and he had a feeling those three were up to some fun. Jack's eyes finally landed on the last of the crowd that seemed to radiate a type of authority - a girl with fiery curls, clear blue eyes and a dress of teal.

The colour of the dress was defiantly familiar and Jack had to think back, but not very hard; the teal cover of the book was very much like the fabric of the dress and Jack thanked his lucky stars and Manny for making this Defender blantly obvious. The head of red curls was not one to be lost in a crowd, that was for sure.

Hiccup ducked back, coming up beside Jack and peering at his shadowed face. "You okay?" Hiccup whispered, taking to get a clear look at Jack, who turned to the side so that only the outline of his pale nose and pink smile was visible to the boy.

"You worry too much, Hic," Jack told him, aware of the heat shadowing him like an angry hand. The frost that had once clung to his armour

had melted away, leaving his armour warm and dry from the sun's persistence; the inside of Jack's armour, however, had begun to collect in cool puddles against his cooling flesh. Jack was surprised he wasn't steaming, as it sure felt like it - another thing he would never admit aloud, not with Hiccup beside him.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "You never worry," Hiccup muttered, "Someone has to do it for you."

The two were silent as Stoick and The Bear King reminiscenced; Hiccup glanced at Jack and asked silently, "Have you found The Defender yet?"

"Yeah," Jack whispered back. "The girl with the curly red hair."

Hiccup set his gaze on her. "How do you know?"

"I just do," Jack said, smirking and sneaking a glance at Hiccup, who had given him a very annoyed look out the corner of his eye. Jack jerked his chin out in her direction. "The woman past the three kiddos is wearing a crown; I suspect she's The Bear King's wife and the Queen. The next Defender is obviously a princess."

Hiccup puffed a quick shot of air from his nostrils, shaking his head at Jack's perceptiveness. "Anyone could've figured that out, Jack."

"Yeah?" Jack raised an eyebrow, his teeth showing as he parted his lips in a smile. "Like Snot or Tuff would've known that; you gotta give me _some _credit, Hiccup."

Hiccup tried to hide his smile from Jack, but Jack caught it and his smile seemed to dampen, as Jack took in the side profile of Hiccup's face. He wanted desperately to reach down and grab the Viking's hand, but the wetness of his sweat prevented him, as did the call of Stoick for his son.

Hiccup glanced at Jack, walking through the sparse crowd of Vikings which parted, allowing him to come forward. Toothless and the rest of the dragons, who had been surveying from the sky, began to float down, or at least Toothless did. Toothless landed near Hiccup, causing gasps to ripple through the townspeople; the crowd grew apprehensive as The Bear King stepped forward, smiling good naturedly as he embraced Hiccup in a large hug, lifting the boy off his feet. When placed back down, Jack noticed that their prosthetics were both on their left feet; Jack tilted his head at the realisation and his eyes fell to the grass before lifting and focusing on Toothless as The Bear King turned to him.

Toothless eyed The Bear King, glancing sideways at Hiccup. Hiccup nodded encouragingly and Toothless stared at the large hand aimed at his snout. Toothless rolled his eyes, apparently accustomed to this, and placed his snout against The Bear King's hand. The crowd visibly relaxed and Jack smirked, crossing his arms, causing the braces to clink.

The Bear King laughed, rubbing the dragon's snout before turning to Hiccup and placing a heavy hand on his tiny shoulder; the force made Hiccup's knees buckle but he held his ground, or tried to, at least.

"Hiccup!" The Bear King exclaimed loudly. "Have you gotten smaller?"

Hiccup gave a sarcastic laugh; Jack let out a real one. The sound of his laugh caught the attention of the fiery princess, who'd been staring at the dragon and boy with keen interest; her blue eyes met the royal blue of the figure's hood, the silver of his armour and the paleness of his skin. She raised an eyebrow at him, feeling as though she'd seen him somewhere before ...

Jack glanced away from Hiccup, feeling as if he were being watched; his eyes flicked up and he caught a pair of clear blue eyes staring at him. In return, she saw his bright blue eyes glisten like ice against the shadow of his hood and he smiled slightly, a set feeling deep in his gut telling him that any doubt of her not being the Defender of Summer before was defiantly diminished.

The two were interrupted as The Bear King addressed the Vikings and his people with the promise of a grand feast fit for the long journey they'd taken and a separate one for himself.

...

"He's been sitting out there for a while, North," Bunny said, his voice tinged with concern. "He's gonna get a gnarly case of frostbite."

North mirrored the same concern as he stared at the back of the feathery white wings, the same colour as the snow and ripped suit he wore. Eric had been out there quite a while and North knew he was punching himself over the fact that Tim had gotten captured. North sighed, nodding, before setting out across the snow to take a seat near Eric, who didn't seem to hear the crunching of the snow underneath the heavier man's footsteps.

Eric's eyes were ringed pink and he stared down at the broken hourglass in his trembling hands, finally saying over the whipping of the wind, "We're not leaving him."

North nodded. "Wouldn't dream of it."

Eric's nostrils flared. "This is Pitch's fault, you know that, right? He's got Peter and Tim - the Guardian of Youth and the Guardian of Time. He's going to do something and you better be ready - "

"Trust us," North said gently. "We know what we are doing."

"Really?" Eric growled. "Did you know that you just got betrayed by that asshole, Winter? This has got his name written all over it. Frost is too busy making out with Vikings to have done this -
"

North glanced up, raising an eyebrow. "What about Jack?"

Eric sighed. "It's not my place to say. You'll have to wait until he comes back."

The two were silent, North blinking confusedly and Eric rubbing his thumb over the cold glass in his hand.

Eric was the first to stand. He helped North to his feet, his determined eyes meeting North's. "We're not letting Tim get hurt," Eric said, his tone stern.

"Pitch won't have a chance to," North said as Eric turned and began to walk to the makeshift leather shield against the torrent of snow and wind. Eric's voice was lost against the wind, "He better not, if he knows what's good for him."

...

Pitch sighed in content, an uncharacteristic hop in his step as the door of the hut closed behind him. He slinked into the shadows of the forest, feeling a prickle of fear from the people at the port at the sight of the Night Fury; Pitch smirked, knowing rightly that Jack had to be among them, as were two Defenders.

In moments, Pitch had journeyed through the Highlands to a crumbled mountains of rocks and stones; the forgotten ruling place of the last Bear King. Pitch stepped from the shadows from inside the dome of stone, his hand twirling as black sand began to surge out from between the rocks, from corners of the Highlands, from the Fire Falls to the dome to the stone hedges of Destiny; the fear of the Brave made Pitch gay with delight and lightheaded with power. A strand of Sand curled along his index finger affectionately before surging into the mass of Nightmares and Pitch had already manifested.

Pitch's eyes shot open just as the two golden irises poked through the top of the black mass of glittering fear; the mass began to move, sand began to revolve, until there were two clawed hindlegs, a massive body, a stubby tail, a pair of clawed forelegs and a large head complete with two large ears, perhaps the size of North's stomach. Pitch grinned; the moonlight streaking through the broken part of the rocky ceiling highlighted the bear's saberlike underbite and the slash of a golden scar over a once dead eye, now golden and alive.

Pitch addressed the bear with both authority and a leer of cockiness, "Why, Mordu, you do look rather frightful in this considerable moonlight; don't you agree, Manny?" Pitch looked to the moon through the ceiling; he could've sworn he saw the face against the glowing sphere frown. Pitch laughed and his laughter aroused a roar from the bear; together, they dissipated into shadows, gone without a trace, the laughter of The Boogeyman and the roaring of the Demon Bear the only factor that the two had been there.

**WE'RE PAST 100 REVIEWS.**

**I CAN'T EVEN.**

**SO YOU GUYS GET MERIDA NOW.**

17. Chapter 17

The Vikings were led past a stone bridge, around the outskirts of a forest and past lone cottages poking up through clumps of weeds and formations of rocks. The dirt path changed in colour from a blonde tan to a rich brown; the cottages were covered in thick evergreen ivy

- but it was nothing to the castle.

Jack stared up at the castle, momentarily forgetting how important it was to stay focused and keep that bright red curly head in view; the castle was that magnificent. It was huge with massive stone towers and walls atop a grey cliff sprouting summer grass and moss; people milled about the dirt roads, buying and selling from hide and meat vendors. The stone walls were strung with ivy as thick as green leafy rope; the smell of freshly baked cakes and pastries came from what Jack suspected was the castle kitchen. He had to wipe his lip to keep from salivating; he might not have been able to eat but his mind and body sure missed the sensation.

Hiccup was in front of Jack; they were separated by a few lines of Vikings and Scots. Jack could see Hiccup beside his father as Stoick and The Bear King continued to converse, rather loudly, despite the already loud atmosphere of the centre of the kingdom. Vendors shouted at Jack and the Vikings, trying to tempt them into emptying their pockets; Jack didn't enjoy having to ignore them as he had been ignored for three hundred years himself but none of the Vikings seemed interested in what the vendors had to give until they began offering ale and whisky and Jack wanted to stay as inconspicuous as possible.

"Aye, White 'Air," A voice said beside Jack; he blinked and glanced to the side, met by a head of unruly orange curls like summer flame and blue eyes as clear as a river's tide. "You with the Vikings, are yeh?"

Jack nodded, continuing forward.

She had to pull up her dress a bit to keep in stride with him; her pale freckled hands full of green cloth. Up close, Jack noticed the golden silky fabric poking through the top cloth near her hands, elbows and shoulders; the shoulder bit was obscured by her hair. She glanced at his face, as if wanting a better look. "'Ave never seen yeh come with the lot befer. You new?"

"Newer," Jack replied, his boots scraping against a patch of mud.

"What's yer name?" She inquired; Jack had a feeling she already knew. It was an odd feeling, but ever since Hiccup had told Jack he'd seen him before, Jack had began to feel as if he'd crossed paths with the Defenders more than once. But wouldn't he have remembered a girl with such fiery hair and a boy with such soft lips?

"Ja - ," Jack began, as the girl finished it, " - ck."

Jack stopped midstride, turning his face to stare at her. Then he realised she'd stepped into a pile of warm horse dung and was frantically trying to wipe her shoe in the grass, repeating over and over, "Ack!"

When she'd gotten as much as she could off her shoe, she glanced at Jack through the curls that had dropped in front of her face. She bit the inside of her cheek before thrusting her hand out, using her other hand to throw the hair from her face.

Jack stared at the pink freckled hand; the frill of gold silk

protruded near her wrist. He felt his own reach up in instinct, his metal brace glinting in the light of the sun overhead; frostbit fingers met sunkissed and the two immediately shied away from one another at the feeling of the other's body temperature.

"Am Merida," Summer said, still feeling cold snake up her arm in a shiver.

"Jack." His pale skin was burnt red at the contact.

The two stared at each other, one set of blue confused, another calm and collected. Jack rubbed the burnt bit of his skin against his chestplate and Merida brought her fingers together to preserve heat.

The girl's head turned at the call of her mother; she glanced at Jack, still holding her hands. "'Ave to go," She said, her tone still ebbed with confusion at the cold touch of the mysterious white-haired Viking, "'All see yeh at the feast, then, Yak."

Jack was about to correct her when she turned on her soiled heel and followed her family through a large wooden door, similar to those Jack had seen depicting the entrances of medieval castles from Jamie's storybooks. The Vikings began to file through the door into the castle; Jack decided to follow, as his hair was beginning to catch the attention of the lot of Scottish vendors whom he had all seen his meeting with the princess; they began to shout after him as he hastened to quicken his step. The calls of "White 'Air!" and "Yak! Yak!" met Jack's pink ears as he rushed back into line with the other Vikings, already on their tour of The Bear King's castle.

...

The tour began and ended with The Grand Hall, as throughout the entire tour, instead of complimenting the intricate carvings in the wood and the generous amount of bedchambers for their usage, many of the Vikings complained of their grumbling stomachs and their aching feet (everyone besides Hiccup, who did compliment the carvings and thank Elinor countless times).

When Elinor finally grew tired of the complaining (mainly from her husband, Fergus) she clapped her hands and addressed everyone with one word, a word that roused cheers from both the Scots and the Vikings: "Feast!"

In The Grand Hall, there was a separate table for The Bear King and his family and his selected Viking friends (Stoick, Hiccup and everyone aboard the ship they'd arrived on). Jack sat near the end, farther from Hiccup than he liked but the lack of the boy's distraction allowed Jack to pay more attention to the people and their tendencies.

Halfway through the meal, Jack had already been able to pinpoint many of the Scots - 'The Trouble Triplets' or Three T's as Jack pegged them; the large woman who was known to scold but made Fergus' favourite cakes; Fergus, a loud talker and ravenous eater with a bit of a drinking problem who slurred with Stoick as they looped their arms together to gulp down their own mugs of fine malt whisky; Elinor, who watched her family disapprovingly out of the corner of her eye but tried hard not to scold; and Merida, the princess, who

did not eat at all like a princess and talked out with a mouthful of lamb and rebellious tongue about her point of view on the sea dragon massacres that had been a topic of conversation by Hiccup.

Jack realised that the princess was as fiery and unruly as her summer flame hair; she told vulgar jokes under her breath, causing the Dragon Trainers to burst into laughter over their cups of watered ale; Snotlout actually spit his into his plate of sheep stomach, cackling maniacally and slapping his knee.

A set of wolfhounds prowled for food between tables and boot-clad feet; Jack noticed them and picked his plate from the table, setting it in his lap and glancing around the table. He dumped the plate upside down before stealthily placing it back on the table before him; the wolfhounds caught the scent and dashed to the table, fighting beneath it for the stomach with gnashing teeth and spitting snouts. One of them, victorious, flew off on a flurry of grey feet to the town centre to loose the other hound that was chasing it down; Jack glanced under the table to the other wolfhound that was lapping up the abandoned meat juice.

Jack glanced up, hearing his name. Merida was watching him, obviously awaiting a reply. Jack glanced sideways at the Trainers, all watching Jack; Hiccup and Astrid looked apprehensive. Jack looked around wildly, inclining his head slightly forward as he asked, "Huh?"

Snotlout and Tuffnut laughed; Merida repeated her statement. "You don't look much like a Dragon Trainer - so what are yeh?"

Jack raised his eyebrows, unsure how to reply to her bluntness.

"He's from Jotunheim," Snot said for him.

Merida laughed, her pink hand curling along the rim of her cup of watered ale. "'Suppose it fits - what with the 'air an' the cold."

Jack shrugged. "Yeah, well."

"But, the armour - yeh've gotta be something big, 'aven't ya?" Merida continued.

"We just brought him along for the Hunt," Snot continued. "He doesn't do much other than that."

Merida didn't look at Snot; she was focused on Jack and the attention unnerved him; after getting barely any attention before, suddenly being bombarded with looks and stares was hard to get used to espically when he'd been invisible for three hundred years.

"So, ya hunt, do yeh?" Merida inquired. "What do you use?"

"Staff," Jack said immeaditly. The Trainers all stared at him as if he were talking in foreign tongues; Merida furrowed her brow.

"Never heard of it," Merida said.

"It's typically used for stunning," Jack continued, "but it's got a

hook on the end, to sort of finish anybody off or force them off their feet."

Merida nodded, obviously still confused; the only two to understand what Jack meant were Astrid and Hiccup, who could barely hear over Fergus and Stoick's loud drunken speaking. "How about you?" Jack asked, trying to keep from having unnessecary pauses.

"Bow," Merida said. "'Ave quite a shot."

None of the Trainers were eager to call her bluff; they knew that this princess wasn't an ordinary one even from just a first impression.

"Like Robin Hood," Jack muttered, remembering Jamie talking highly of the hooded bandit that stole from the rich and gave to the poor; his comment was only heard by Merida, as seconds later, as she was trying to recall what he'd said, her shoe was then unceremoniously ripped off by the hound beneath the table, which had been bitten in the rear by the two other wolfhounds that had reappeared under the table to fight for the soiled shoe. Any conversation was cut off by the angry barking of the dogs as they fought for the shoe.

Jack laughed slightly, looking behind him as the dogs left out the open door, knocking over the scolding woman as she tried to balance two trays of cakes. Jack leapt to his feet, knowing he had to save the cakes - it was the one thing he'd actually force himself to eat - and so he rushed to the woman's aid, despite how many children she had scolded in the past. She teetered back and forth and he nimbly caught a tray, loosing only a few cakes to the floor; the woman caught the next tray and Jack held out an arm to keep the woman from crashing into the floor and himself.

The room grew quiet until Fergus shouted, "CAKES!"

The room went back to its loud atmosphere, only louder by the shouts and hollers and applause for Jack's save of the cakes. The woman he'd helped blushed a rosy pink and he helped her by taking one of the trays to Fergus; more servant women came in with more trays, two apace per table. Fergus clapped Jack on the shoulder, so that Jack was forced to stay in close proximity with his whisky breath, thanking him loudly by shouting in his ear.

Fergus let Jack go, giving him an armload of cakes to take to his side of the table, which already had its own tray; the tray was being quickly depleted, however, by the snatching hands of the Triple T's and the Trainers. Hiccup and Astrid moved to sit near Jack when Snot snarled that Jack was a show-off; they flanked him on both sides and there was no more talking, at least from those three, who were too busy eating to converse.

The cakes smelt divine and were warm to the touch, but Jack didn't know exactly what they tasted like. He tried one, only to be greeted by the bland taste of air instead of flaky pastry and strawberry jam.

He glanced at Hiccup, who was eating his own cake. "How's it taste?" Jack asked, lowering his voice.

Hiccup tried to speak through his cake, then thought better of it and

swallowed hugely. He smiled sheepishly then glanced at Jack's half-eaten cake with sudden guilt. "Can you not ... ?"

"Nah," Jack said, placing it on the table; he bent his arms on the table and crossed them, placing his chin on his topmost arm. He glanced at Hiccup, smiling slightly, "Describe it to me, Hic."

"What? The cake?" Hiccup asked, his mouth suddenly very dry.

Jack nodded, letting his eyes flutter shut. He tried to block out the noise of The Grand Hall.

Hiccup glanced down at the cake in his hand. He sighed, took a swig of his ale and then a bite of his cake, mulling the taste over his tongue. He was met by a barrage of flavours. "It's sweet," Hiccup began, "we don't have many sweet things in Berk. Astrid, do you remember that stuff Gobber tried making, with the goat milk?"

"Yeah," Astrid nodded, "he tried to make this icy drink that turned out really sweet and he got really angry about it because it aggravated his stone tooth."

Jack smiled, thinking about Tooth and how panicked she would be if she ever saw Gobber's stone replacement for his lower bicuspid. Jack peeked open an eye, asking, "Are you talking about ice cream?"

Hiccup and Astrid glanced at each other over the flare of Jack's winter-white hair; together they asked, "What's that?"

Jack laughed, shrugging, waiting for Hiccup to continue.

"Well, it's really soft and spongy," Hiccup continued, "and it has this berry stuff on it and it pretty much gets soaked inside the cake. Then there's this powder on it that's really sweet - "

" - powdered sugar," Jack told them. "My first believer's obsessed with the stuff."

Astrid smirked, glancing at Jack. "Look, Frost, can you taste ale?"

"Haven't tried," Jack said, running a finger along his cup rim. He sighed, picking the cup up and leaning up on his elbows to take a drink. He didn't exactly taste anything but he did get a buzz - Jack wasn't used to that. He wasn't sure how the buzz even got into his system - maybe since he hadn't had it since three hundred years or maybe it aroused his fun, he wasn't sure. All he knew was he missed that feeling and he wanted it. The fact that Jack took several more drinks after answered Astrid's question.

"Whoa, kid, calm down," Astrid said, grabbing Jack's wrist, "you're not going to be able to sleep if you keep that up."

She was right, of course, as when everyone else was snoring in their bedchambers, Jack was staring at the dark ceiling, his arms behind his head, squishing his pillow, the rest of his body covered with a fur blanket. Jack stretched his arm to get to his glowing satchel; he

pulled a fiery red hourglass and a golden hourglass from the silver folds of the bag. They were both equally bright, although the gold one glowed brighter near the fairy story.

Jack shoved the time-keepers back into the satchel, slamming his back into the bed again. He squeezed his eyes shut, trying to sleep - but everytime he closed them, he saw darkness and he remembered his first memory of the cold and the dark and the loneliness. He could see a shadow of wings and a flurry of claws and a twisting hourglass twirling upside down, tinkling grains of sand within the glass of its container.

After several hours of restless turning, Jack fell asleep, his fists clutching sections of fur blanket as if his life depended on it. He was dreaming again - of that memory - of his sister, of him, falling through ice and then of him letting the Guardians down, seeing The Warren destroyed and the hope leaving the kids' eyes, leaving Jamie's eyes; he saw Hiccup falling from his dragon, the princess with the fiery hair's fearful reflection in a pair of dark merciless eyes and strands of gold like curls of colour from a paintbrush. Soon, all the colour was gone and Jack was reacquainted with the dark and the cold and the fear that held him so endearingly, so tenderly as if he were a fragile thing, easily broken. Already broken.

...

Meanwhile, Hiccup lay awake, still feeling not as quite a buzz as Jack, but enough to keep him awake. He tossed and he turned, uncomfortable without Jack beside him or his dragon breathing next to a flickering fire. Hiccup sat up on his bed, grabbing his metal leg; he latched it on, letting it touch the stone floor until he was sure it could support his weight. Then Hiccup stood, teetering; he ripped the fur blanket from the bed as he walked to the door, pulling it open and peeking his head out. When the coast was clear, Hiccup left his bedchamber, trying to use to blanket to muffle the clinking of his metal foot.

Hiccup passed Jack's room, wondering if he was still awake. If he wasn't, Hiccup didn't wish to bother him; he knew how hard it was for Jack to sleep. Hiccup continued past Jack's door. He walked past the stuffed bear in The Grand Hall; it was a hauntingly tall figure with bared fangs and beady eyes and claws as lethal as knives. Hiccup made sure to skirt around it quickly.

Hiccup finally pushed his way past the castle doors, making sure they closed firmly behind him. Hiccup made his way down to the stables, as that was where the dragons were being permitted to sleep. Hiccup didn't see Toothless in the hoard of dragons resting on the straw-strewn dirt floor; he squinted, trying to see him in the lack of light. "Toothless," Hiccup called silently, "Toothless, come on, bud - AHH!"

Hiccup got hit in the back with a force of about three Vikings; Toothless panted at him, tongue lolling and eyes wide and emerald. The dragon started to lick on Hiccup's face and Hiccup threw his arms up to try to fend him off - "Toothless, honestly! I'm here to go to bed, not play!"

Toothless sat down at that, watching Hiccup as he pointed to a corner of the dragon stable that was unoccupied. Toothless gave a sigh and

followed the order, which in his mind was a mere suggestion, and laid himself down, curling himself up and closing his eyes. He peeked one open expectantly. Hiccup stepped over and around the other dragons, all the while dragging a blanket; when he finally reached Toothless, he sat down and snuggled into his cool scaly hide, wrapping his blanket around him and the dragon's feet.

Toothless folded a wing over the two of them, rubbing his snout into the floor before letting out a puff of warm breath to disturb the straw near his nose. The straw floated back down, closer to the dragon's nostrils than before; the dragon puffed out another breath and finally closed his eyes, feeling Hiccup rustle into his side.

Hiccup fell asleep to the rhythmic beating of the dragon's heart and the radiated body heat of its hide; the heat reminded him of fire, of devastating flame, and he was choking on smoke and his eyes were watering from the flame and he was falling, the wind, it was screaming in anguish; the noise caused him to jerk and thrash against Toothless, who was having a similar dream, that from an ariel view, watching Hiccup fall from below, his arms outstretched, a scream for the dragon coursing up his throat before the raging flames leapt upward and swallowed the boy whole.

...

Pitch had decided to wander the Highlands before he resided once again to his humble Dark Kingdom; it was refreshing, this taste of fear from children whom he haunted generations later in a modernised sense. Fear, it was a funny thing; no matter the time nor the age, there was always fear, always anxiety, always a way for him to prickle the hairs on the backs of rigid necks and enough darkness to manipulate into shadows and shapes, enough children to allow to quake beneath blankets and enough imagination to evoke the scariest beasts even Pitch hadn't wanted to let run amock.

Imagination was timeless, it seemed, as was fear.

"What a delightful combination," Pitch mused, peeking his head between shadows from across the Highlands; his very presence provoked such a fear in them all - even adults, _especially_ adults. He watched a practically large man with fiery red hair whimper in his sleep; Pitch had the urge to laugh. He normally laughed at the incompetence of others whom were frightened to face their fears; what made this man any different?

_You know that fear, _An unfamiliar voice said; he'd rarely heard this one since he'd felt the change of darkness overtake him. _That's the fear of losing a family._

_I haven't got a family, _A bitter voice answered the first. _I never have._

_You did, once, _The more fatherly voice urged. _You want one again. You wish you could be with her again but she's frightened, she'll always be frightened of what you've become. Jack won't be any different; the one who has to change isn't them, it's _you.

"PIPE DOWN!" Pitch shouted; his voice caused the black image above the man's head to falter, signalling his wakening. The black bear in

the dream began to crumble to dust and the man rolled to his side, trying to see through bleary eyes and a fresh sheen of tears over bright blue eyes - eyes that reminded Pitch of a certain plan-wrecking white-haired winter spirit ...

Pitch's hands clenched into fists at his sides as he glared through the dark out at Jack; he could see the boy trembling from his most recent Nightmare. Pitch was torn between sneering at the fact that he'd broken the child so early in the morning and kicking himself for getting joy from this.

Eventually, he decided to leave, exhibiting his stay on the shadows under the townspeople's eyes and the early awakening of most of the Highlands, even before the Sun came to force him into hiding; his hand gripped the neck of an hourglass of black sand, which he shook.

_It's nice, having time on my side like this, _Pitch thought for a moment before outstretching a foot through the portal, only to be greeted by the face of a certain curly-haired wench who glared at Pitch with burning eyes.

"I suppose the bear ordeal went well?" She snapped. "Did the thought of forewarning ever come to you?"

Pitch dully noted the fresh scratches on her bare arms, to which black sand bled instead of red blood of the Living, of the Real, of the Believed.

"Why, no, it didn't," Pitch said, turning on his heel and walking to his throne; he sat with a grand flourish, looking to the icy centerpiece before him. "You, there," Pitch called to a hoard of shadows much too close to his throne to his liking, "A little to the left, if you will."

/I'm on Fall Break so you guys get an update because you're lovely

I also have a Halloween party later tonight, to which I'm going as Jack, thought you'd like to know

Oh hey and Merida's great just

End
file.